

THE
YOUNG WIDOW;
OR THE
HISTORY
OF
CORNELIA SEDLEY.

VOLUME I.



THE
YOUNG WIDOW;
OR THE
HISTORY
OF
CORNELIA SEDLEY,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

Non per elezion, ma per destino.

PETRARCH.

VOLUME I.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR MESSRS. L. WHITE, P. BYRNE,
P. WOGAN, H. COLBERT, A. GRUEBER,
C. LEWIS, J. MOORE, AND J. HALPEN.
M DCC LXXXIX.



C. Seneca

C O R N E L I A, &c.

L E T T E R I.

FROM HENRY SEYMOUR TO EDMUND
AUDLEY.

REJOICE with me, dear Edmund, rejoice !
for he is gone. Yes ! by all the honest
powers, who frown on the unsightly union of
age and youth, of decrepitude and beauty, he is
departed.—Aye ! my friend, departed, like a
shadow as he seemed to be, to the region of spi-
rits. That hour, for which you have heard me
pant so frequently with all the fervency of an
impassioned soul, that blessed hour is at length
arrived.—Cornelia, the lovely, the tender, the
patient, the dutiful Cornelia is delivered from
her Ægyptian bondage ; Cornelia is a widow :
and what a widow ! Oh Heavens ! a thousand
times more able to exercise and to gratify the im-
perial passion of my heart, than all the boasted
virgins that Circassia could exhibit. You have
heard me to rave on her graces, her virtues, her
enchantment ; and with true philosophical
phlegm, or with a friendly design, perhaps, to
divert me from what you considered as a very
hopeless attachment, you have told me that my
heart is the dupe of my own feverish imagina-
tion. Yes ! you argumentative rogue ! I per-
fectly remember how you employed against my
VOL. I. B passion

passion the united powers of logic and of ridicule. I see you at this moment with that singular, variable, and interesting face of yours, in which the rigid frown of Zeno is perpetually mingling with the wanton smile of Epicurus, I see you arranging your tremendous syllogisms, and preparing to tell me once more, that one of your two positions must be true, that either Cornelia was never half so lovely as I have represented her, or if she was once indeed a perfect model of loveliness, that her charms must have withered, like the leaves of an unfortunate rose, barbarously stationed under the deadly shade of a decaying yew tree.

I have not, you find, either forgot, or forgiven the abominable metaphor, by which you tried, like a rough empiric as you are, to cure my heart by disgusting my fancy; a sort of quackery, that is, I must confess, very frequently successful, and practised with marvellous effect, by the women, in their attempts to annihilate the influence of a rival! But let me tell you, prophane wretch as you are,

Aurora springing from Tithonus' bed, was never half so fresh, so enchanting, so divine, as my angelical widow.—I call her mine, because I feel, that I shall be frantic, if I cannot make her so. Yet that pious barbarian, your brother Charles, told me the other day, with a sacerdotal assurance, that I had not religion enough to deserve, or maintain her; confound his presumption! were he of any family but yours, I should think him the grossest of hypocrites. Because he has married the fair buxom daughter of a pompous



ous high priest, the rogue assumes all the arrogance of the Catholic Church, and thinks he has a right to send to purgatory all who presume to act, or to think, in a style that differs from his own. He teaches us, to be sure, by his example, a most orthodox system of happiness, for he kisses no woman but his wife, reads no book but the Bible, and labours hard to reinforce the militia of Heaven with a new party of cherubims, as his good woman, after making him a present of twins but a few months ago, looks already as if she intended to double that favour. Deuce take the fellow! while I am laughing at him, I am almost ready to envy his felicity, and I ought indeed to tell you, that with his insolent rebuke to me, which I have mentioned, he mingled such an air of concern and benevolence, that I felt a strange sort of momentary doubt in my mind, whether I ought to challenge, or to embrace him. As it generally happens in the disagreeable perplexity of a mixed and equivocal sentiment, I did nothing: yet had I been hypocritical, or discreet enough to pursue my own interest, in spite of a ruffled spirit, I certainly ought to have embraced him as the dearest friend I have in the world; since I am sufficiently aware, that he will have great influence on the future destination of my enchanting widow. You know, I suppose, that as he was the favourite relation of Mr. Sedley, he makes a most important figure in his will, as his confidential trustee for the young widow, and those two lovely infants, whom she seemed to have made miraculously, without any assistance of her unequal partner. Pious as he is, I really

believe your brother will manage their ample property with a faithful discharge of his trust. If I thought him indeed inclined to play the Jew, or the priest, (for with me, I confess, they are almost synonymous) I would willingly give him all the wealth of the widow, to secure me the rapid possession of her heart and hand. Yet I have such a rooted detestation of artifice and falsehood, that I could not play the pious hypocrite with him for an hour, if I knew it would make me master of the object I adore.---I must however contrive to associate as much as possible with your brother, and the more so as his wife is the bosom friend of my Cornelia. Pray write me word instantly, if your sister Lucy is now residing with you. I hope from the bottom of my soul that she is, as I know that she and your ~~father~~ Charles never pass a week without writing to each other. It is from this quarter alone, that I can at present gain a little unsuspected insight into the heart and spirit of my dear Cornelia. I conjure you by our friendship to obtain for me all possible information concerning her plan of life, her thoughts, her feelings, and every minute article relating to her. Observe this request, as you wish not only to promote the happiness, but to preserve the existence of

Your affectionate, &c.

LET.

LETTER II.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO HENRY
SEYMOUR.

I REJOICE with you indeed, my dear Seymour ; but I confess it is with a fearful joy.—You know that I am naturally subject to an anxious timidity concerning those I regard ; and if my sympathy in your present transport appears too much chastised by apprehension, you will, I hope, impute, what you may at first consider as a deficiency of spirit, to an excess of affection.—In truth, you are not only in the very limited number of my dearest confidential Friends, but you are the very Friend, whose peculiar qualities and situation have filled me, for sometime, with the most affectionate solicitude.—I own to you, that I tremble, lest the mischievous power of Chance should conspire with some of your peculiarities, I should rather say with your only defect, to counteract all the noble advantages you possess. What young man ever entered the world with more abundant means to render it a scene of cheerfulness and delight ! You have an excellent constitution, with an engaging figure ; you have an ample fortune, without a single incumbrance ; you have a gay and brilliant imagination ; you have a warm, a benevolent heart ; but allow the frowning Stoic to add, you have a precipitancy

precipitancy of spirit, which may rapidly convert all these instruments of Happiness into sources of Misery.

But I abuse the privilege you allow me of preaching against your foibles, in giving you a dull unreasonable sermon, when a little timely raillery might not only be more pleasant, but more efficacious. Instead therefore of continuing my dictatorial harangue on your imperfections, let me only advise you not to write an offer of marriage to your widow, while she is adjusting her weeds; nor a challenge to my brother, in consequence of that insupportable provocation—his feeling a sincere wish to see you a good Christian.

Though you tell me I love to touch your foibles with the caustic of sarcasm, I find that I cannot jest with any tolerable grace, or ease, on subjects that may press upon my heart with such serious weight.

There is hardly a circumstance in life which could give me more pain, than a quarrel between you and my brother: and when I consider your respective situations, I shudder at the probability of such an event. It would certainly be most impolitic in you to offend him at present; yet you have such an exalted idea of never sacrificing your sentiments to your interest, that my caution to you on this ground might be more likely to produce, than to prevent the mischief, I would guard against. As I have a most cordial affection both for you and my brother, and a much more intimate knowledge of both than you have yet acquired of each other, allow me to inform you,
that

that although you differ on one great subject, there are many points of agreement and resemblance between you, that ought to unite us all in a very firm and inviolable friendship. It was your lot, as you approached towards manhood, to be connected with some mercenary priests, both in humble and high stations, whose ungenerous conduct inspired, or rather inflamed you, with a vehement prejudice, not only against their whole order, but against all persons who are very zealously attached to the Religion they profess. Youth and pleasure have not hitherto allowed your reason sufficient time to examine and correct this early, this unfortunate prejudice; and accident perhaps has repeatedly conspired with the native ardor of your mind to strengthen the honest indignant feelings on which it was founded. My brother Charles, though he has neither the habit, nor the occupations of a divine, is indeed a man of as religious a mind, as the church can exhibit: but his Religion, if I may use such a distinction, is rather constitutional, than acquired; it arises more from tenderness of heart, and sensibility of mind, than from extensive study and profound meditation. His piety is the child of Gratitude, not of Fear; and its chief characteristics are cheerfulness and benevolence: it is his favorite maxim, that Religion not only takes from us the bitter sense of calamity, but gives a finer zest to all the pleasures of life. His doctrine is indeed very forcibly recommended by his example; for he is by many degrees the most happy being that I ever knew.—We all talk you know of God, as our
general

general Parent ; but few of us, I fear, are able to look up to him with a true filial spirit. Of all the men whom I have had occasion to observe in this point of view, Charles, I must say, is the only person who ever seemed to repose with the happy affectionate confidence of an innocent child on the bosom of his Creator.

You will begin to suspect that I am metamorphosed into a Moravian ; or at least that I have caught my brother's enthusiasm without his vivacity : but to confess my own weakness, they are equally beyond my reach. Connected as we are by nature and by affection, I find there is such an unalterable difference in our characters, that I might as well attempt to acquire the exact turn of his features, as the peculiar cast of his mind. When I am in one of my argumentative metaphysical moods, I reason myself into a consolatory persuasion that his great superiority over me, both in goodness and gaiety, is principally owing to a mechanical felicity of frame,

But I am rambling very far from the main object of my letter, which is to conjure you not to indulge your wit and imagination in any satirical sallies against the church, and her sons, in the presence of my brother. I do not pretend to say he is right in his maxim, that piety is an essential ingredient in a good husband (the Ladies we know are ready enough to grant a dispensation on this article) ; but of this I am sure, If Charles is once convinced that you are possessed with the spirit of outrageous Irreligion, he will labour hard to preserve your lovely widow from a connexion, which in his idea, must be productive of misery,
both

both to her and her children. If I thought you an absolute debauchee, I should be very fearful of giving you such a hint, because I know, in that case, what your answer, or at least what your conduct would be. You would engage the amorous wishes of the widow in a conflict with the pious advice of her guardian, for the pleasure of watching the battle, and discovering which would be triumphant. But though we have both of us had more resemblance to the libertine, than to the anchorite, in our adventures, I am persuaded that you have a true and chaste affection for this divine little widow, and of course you can never feel a wish to fill her tender bosom with painful disquietude and contention, when fortune seems to offer you the tranquil acquisition of her heart and hand. When I thought that your admiration of her charms could only involve you in a hopeless or a dangerous attachment I endeavoured to laugh away your love; but the great change in your Cornelia's situation has turned me from an opponent into an advocate for your passion. I have now only to conjure you, not to throw any stumbling block yourself into the very inviting primrose path, that is just opened before you. I can truly say, to encourage you, that you have as many advantages for the chase of a widow, as a greyhound has for that of a hare; but remember! the greyhound is sometimes apt to overrun his game, and to lose his prey by the very rapidity which seemed to ensure it. I foresee and acquiesce in the justice of your retort; that I have the slow foot of a beagle, and frequently suffer the object of my

B 3

wishes

wishes to escape me, by the tardiness of my pursuit. Agreed! but pray recollect what a very useful assistant the slow dog often proves to the swift one.

That I am highly anxious for your success, you will clearly perceive by my writing you so long a letter, without touching on my own less delicate amours. Indeed, I should think it almost a profanation of your divine Cornelia, if I presumed to talk of the wayward Sylvia in the same page. I will only add therefore that having been wickedly tormented by a mistress, I am particularly solicitous to see you religiously happy in a wife, and let me close that friendly wish with a devout Amen!

P. S. You will think I am proving the truth of an old saying, which tells us all the pith of a letter is contained in the postscript, when I inform you here, that my sister Lucy is with me, and that I engage for her being as much the patroness of your affection, as the duties and punctilios of female friendship will allow her to be.

LETTER III.

FROM CORNELIA SEDLEY TO HARRIOT
AUDLEY.

ALAS! my most tender and dearest friend, what a bitter misfortune to me is the provoking little accident, which has confined you
to

to your chamber at a time when my heart and soul have such pressing occasions for your society !

Surely I am destined to be for ever ungrateful ; for is there not much ingratitude in this complaint, considering the kind and brotherly attention that I receive from your excellent husband, and the affectionate manner in which you press him to remain at a distance from you so long as his presence here can be any way serviceable to me and my dear little orphans ? Your own heart will witness for me, that I do him only simple justice in saying, that no man in the world could discharge the mournful office, in which he has so graciously engaged, with more delicate propriety, or with more soothing friendship. Indeed, I know not how poor Cornelia could have supported her existence without him ; for in the week preceding Mr. Sedley's death, a scene passed between us, which annihilated all the little strength of body and mind, with which I had endeavoured to prepare myself for that most awful expected event. You will conceive the impression it made upon me, when I tell you, that I have sat down four different days with a firm resolution to give you a minute account of it, and that I have been repeatedly prevented by the bursting tears of anguish and self-reproach.—Ah ! my dear Harriot, had you been a witness of that distressing conversation, you would no more take the part of your self-reproaching Cornelia. No, you would certainly join with my own heart in telling me, that as I was not happy in being connected with so noble, so elegant, so affectionate a mind as my departed Sedley's, I can never deserve happiness
on

on earth. Good Heaven ! how strangely does the capricious human spirit administer to its own disquietude ! How silly a wretch have I been, to live six years with such a man, and not love him with true affection, till the very moment in which he seemed to hover in a middle state between earth and heaven ! In truth, he was much more of an angel than a mortal in the heart-piercing conversation I have mentioned, and of which I will now endeavour to give you the most exact narrative in my power.

I should begin by informing you, that his gloomy and querulous disposition, which we found, you know, so grievous and oppressive in the early periods of his long disorder, changed on a sudden into a kind of seraphic serenity under pain, which excited in all his attendants admiration and reverence. As soon as he found, by a fair trial, that the waters at Bristol had not the slightest effect on that internal uncertain malady, which had so often deceived his physicians, and preyed in so singular a manner on his wasting frame, his mind seemed to pass from a turbulent state of suspense to a tranquil certainty. He was convinced, for the first time, that he was very soon to die ; and the conviction, instead of weakening, appeared to give new energy to his spirits, his faculties, and his affections. Represent to yourself, my dear Harriot, his wasted, yet manly figure, ten times more emaciated than when you last beheld him, and his piercing eyes endued, as it were, with a supernatural keenness, that seemed to search the soul of every person on whom he turned them ! Behold him wrapt in
his

his loose coat of blue velvet, which you sportively used to call his imperial robe, and reclining on a sofa, in a silent conflict with internal pain. Behold your Cornelia preparing for her morning task of reading to the poor sufferer, after the removal of our breakfast, at which he had endured as usual extreme torture on the first reception of a little food into his stomach. His pangs had subsided, and he had made me a signal to open the volume of Shakspeare which I held in my hand, when, instead of obeying it immediately, I ventured to say, "If you are persuaded that Bristol does not suit your complaint, why do you not move from an inconvenient lodging into one of your own comfortable houses?" He fixed upon me those eyes of inexpressible quickness; and after a moment's pause he replied, "I will tell you, my dear Cornelia, very frankly: I wish to die here, because I wish to leave you no vestiges of a wretched scene in either of those habitations, where I hope you are soon to lead a life of quiet, and in due time of joy." His expression struck me in a manner which it is impossible for me to describe: I felt in it a mixture of the tenderest solicitude, and of half-disguised reproach; it distressed me to such a degree, that I could not utter a syllable; but my face, I believe, was covered with an half-guilty blush; and tears started into my eyes. He observed my confusion with pity, and drew me hastily towards him. While he was affectionately pressing one of my hands, the book slipped from the other, and accidentally fell open. His quick eye darted on the page before

fore him, and he instantly exclaimed : Here are words that suit my present feelings exactly ; it is my wish to deserve this character from you, my dear Cornelia, and to leave it engraven on your heart :

“ Nothing in his life

“ Became him, like the leaving it—He died

“ As one that had been studied in his death.”

I have indeed no treasons to confess ; but I have pardon to implore ! Let me now say to you, my dearest Cornelia, what pride and ill humour have hitherto prevented my saying as I ought—let me say, that I most cordially implore your pardon for many, many sensations of pain and depression, with which the peevish and morose spirit of my distemper, for I will not call it mine, has unjustly afflicted you.” This tender unexpected humiliation of an imperious, though affectionate mind, pierced me to the soul. I sunk to the ground, and bathing his hands with my tears, I replied, very truly, that his malady was an excuse for every thing ; but that a creature whom Heaven blest with constant health, and who failed in the duty of patient and cheerful tenderness to the sick—He interrupted me with the kindest emotion, and raising me to his bosom, he exclaimed : “ By Heaven, you have never failed—your life, since our marriage, has been a perfect model of virtue, though not of happiness.” My tears gushed with a vehemence that I could not disguise, at this unmerited encomium. I was on the point of confessing to him, what I have so often lamented to you,
my

my too tender and indulgent Confessor, that although guiltless of any actual offence, I have often been such a wretch as to murmur in secret at my destiny; though I formed it myself, in a voluntary and chearful compliance with the wishes of a most affectionate father. A dread of giving unnecessary pain to my generous Sedley prevented my relieving my over-burthened heart by so frank an avowal of all its unworthiness. I only intimated, in words which my agitation I believe rendered hardly intelligible, that if Heaven would spare his life to my prayers, I would shew myself more thankful for the blessing than I had hitherto been. He now seated me by his side, in a manner that expressed the tenderest solicitude to tranquillize my spirits. "Be calm, he cried, I conjure you, my dear Cornelia; for it is of great importance to the present relief of my mind, and to your future happiness, that I should have a long and unreserved conversation with you." I sat silent, and half petrified with awful expectation. "I have wished (he continued) for some days to enter on this discourse; and I feel, that I must not let slip the present hour, because it is most probable that I shall not have another, in which I may possess ease, and strength of body sufficient to utter all I would say to you: No! my dear Cornelia, you must not think of my recovery. There is not indeed a shadow of foundation for any hope of that kind—and believe me, I am willing to die—my affection for you, strange as it may sound, has a tendency to favour a turn of mind so desirable in a state like mine. I have wished very ineffectually to make
you

you happy ; your excellent father had the same passionate desire ; and as he had also a strong abhorrence for the profligate manners of our young men, and a fond anxiety to guard you from the miseries of conjugal infidelity, he gave you at seventeen to the arms of his particular friend, whose integrity he considered as much more than a compensation for the difference of our age—that difference indeed was not painfully visible at the period of our union, but every succeeding year rendered it more apparent, and accident conspired with time and nature to preclude us from that felicity which he had fondly persuaded himself we were destined to enjoy ; flattered by the alacrity with which you obeyed the wish of a father whom you idolized, I was vain enough to suppose that you loved me, before I had in truth merited your tenderness. Eager to improve your admirable understanding, I began to play the preceptor too soon and too sedulously. I bestowed that time and care on the cultivation of your mind, which I ought to have devoted to the acquisition of your heart. I did not perceive my error, and its very natural consequence, till I had been visited for some time by the severe internal malady which has long rendered my existence so painful to myself, and so burthensome to all around me.—You, my dearest Cornelia, have been a very diligent and a very kind attendant to a wretched invalid ; but your own heart will inform you, that I am not mistaken in saying, you have been so much more from the sense of duty, than from the sentiment of love.—Do not, I conjure you, suppose that
I mean

I mean to cast a shadow of reproach upon you by what I am saying : on the contrary, I consider myself as making a just acknowledgment to the excellence of your conduct ; there is assuredly more virtue in discharging very burthensome and painful duties with the strictest fidelity, than in merely acting from the impulse of an ardent affection. Yet when I have observed your lively spirit depressed, and at times even the loveliness of your countenance impaired, by being involved so early in offices ill-suited to your youth, I have almost thought it a crime in me to labour for the preservation of a life whose continuance could only lengthen your misfortune. He uttered these words with such an enthusiastie mixture of tenderness and despair, that I could remain silent no longer.—I know not however what I attempted to utter, for he soon restrained my endeavour to take a part in the conversation, by requesting me to hear what he wished to say of our children ; a subject, which he had long been unable to touch upon without a very painful and distressing emotion ! After some affectionate remarks on their infantine dispositions, They have, he said, and I hope they will long have, a mother to whom Nature has given every perfection that belongs to the maternal character : but as it is possible that, when they will stand most in need of paternal admonition, they may find only a nominal father, whose parental solicitude may be engrossed by more fortunate children—As he was uttering his apprehension, I felt a sort of proud anguish, and affectionate indignation, that I was unable to suppress ;
and

and I interrupted him with a vehemence of manner so different from my usual behaviour to him, that he gazed at me in silent astonishment, while I exclaimed: I see the full extent and cruelty of your fears. O Sedley! if I have hitherto failed in affection, let me now give you a convincing proof that you are much dearer to me than you imagine. If it will afford any relief to the fond parental anxiety that afflicts you, I will bind myself by any form of adjuration, or engagement; you can prescribe, to live only for your children, and never, whatever offers may tempt me, to marry a second time.—No words, my dear Harriot, can give you a complete idea of the effect which this sudden, unexpected (and you, I know, will call it) romantic testimony of genuine attachment, produced on the dear invalid.—Starting up in a wild agitation of delight, and looking indeed like a being just transported from the grave into paradise, he exclaimed: No, thou divinest of women, I am not such a selfish wretch, as to form a wish so inhuman.—Then drawing me forcibly in his emaciated arms to a pier-glass, at some distance from his sofa, “Look there, my angel, he continued, look there! and let the beautiful image in the mirror inform you what a despicable brute I must be, if, sensible as I am that you have never yet experienced the delicious passion of love, I could suffer you to make such a sacrifice to generosity, as your angelic soul has suggested, No!—But, my Cornelia, I am referring you to a monitor unfaithful to my purpose: however true that reflexion may be to the beauties of your person,
your

your native diffidence will render it a weak interpreter of my meaning. Turn then to me alone, and believe the voice of a dying man, who tells you, in a state which admits not any species of adulation, that you are at this moment, both in person and in mind, one of the most lovely creatures with which the great Parent of all loveliness has deigned to embellish this world. Why do I tell you this?—for the kindest of purposes, to impress on your own mind a juster estimate of the perfections you possess, that seeing at once their rare value, and the various dangers to which they may expose their possessor, you may render them no more the sources of disquietude, but the instruments of happiness. Not marry again! Oh, Heavens! my dearest Cornelia, it is my ardent prayer that you may; and in such a manner, that your second marriage may afford you the fullest compensation for all the inevitable infelicity of the first.

Here his voice failed him, and a fit of his severe agony came on so suddenly, that I was terrified with the idea of his expiring, as he leant, exhausted and speechless, against my bosom. I contrived however to replace him on his sofa, and after some dreadful writhing of his poor tortured frame, he resumed his discourse with an astonishing coherence and composure. In vain I conjured him not to destroy his reviving strength by farther conversation on a subject at once so distressing, and so unnecessary. I am convinced, my dear Cornelia, he replied, that, at this moment, you believe it unnecessary; but the day perhaps may come, when you will reflect upon it

it, as a useful caution, with affectionate gratitude. Having been an unworthy partner to you in life, I am the more anxious to have a friendly and beneficent influence on your thoughts when I have ceased to live. Do not shrink from my discourse with such an appearance of distress!—I have but little more to say; but that little may be of great importance to you: hear it therefore, I conjure you; and as the subject is indeed too affecting to us both, I will then dismiss it for ever!—You have little experience of the world; you have naturally an open, lively, unsuspecting temper: you are still so young, that your beauty, striking as it is, has not yet perhaps attained its perfection. You are hitherto (forgive me for repeating this important truth), you are hitherto a stranger to the passion, which your bosom is naturally formed to feel in the very height of its purity and its power:—a passion, my dear Cornelia, which, even in a heart so virtuous and so gentle as yours, is forcible and imperious to a degree that you can hardly conceive!—No! by Heaven! so far from wishing to withhold you from a future marriage, had I the powers of an angel, I would exert them to select for you an object that should render you the happiest of wives. I have not such a privilege; but I can at least caution you against the kind of character that would have the greatest tendency to produce the opposite effect.—Vice, my dear Cornelia, is a still greater enemy to happiness, than a lingering distemper.—Heaven forbid that you should ever be the wife of a man whose profligacy might induce you to regret your departed

departed invalid !—You must indeed be egregiously deceived before this could happen ; but how common is such deception in the world : How many men have I known extolled by their acquaintance for infinite honesty of heart, and high sentiments of honour, yet practising every device that could be productive of misery to your sex ; and caressed by the polite world in proportion as they merited universal detestation ! What examples have we of husbands, who married with every possible advantage of rank, fortune, understanding and person united in either party ; yet who have wantonly sacrificed every blessing to a rage for licentious pleasure, and have left a lovely woman to ruin her health by dissipation, or to pine in solitude over her declining beauty, and her deserted children !—But is there any kind of caution, which a woman may consider as her safeguard against misery like this —Yes ! my dear Cornelia, there is one, a very simple one, which has chiefly induced me to trouble you with this long discourse. —Let this, I conjure you, be the leading maxim of your life, that he can never be a proper partner for a lovely and innocent woman, who has no sense of his obligations to her Creator !—It is my hope, and my ardent prayer, that you may never bestow your invaluable self on any man, however engaging his accomplishments, and however numerous his good qualities may be, if his mind is avowedly destitute of Religion. Perceiving that his weak frame was exhausted, to the most alarming degree, by the great exertion of talking so long on a subject that pressed with so much weight upon his heart,

I seized

I seized with great eagerness the opportunity of replying. I assured him, that since the hour of my birth, no words had ever made an impression at once so awful and so tender on my mind, as those which he had just uttered. I said this with the strictest truth; and indeed, my dear Harriot, I question if the voice of an angel, giving me counsel from Heaven, could have filled my retentive mind with such grateful admiration. Nor can I think it would have deserved to do so; for though a celestial spirit, descending from a state of beatitude to caution an endangered mortal, might dazzle us in the extreme, and excite our reverence and gratitude, yet I hope it is not profane to say, that in the eyes of affection and of reason, there is something still more admirable in a Being, who, after his temper had been ruined by lingering disease, and his body wasted by incessant pain, instead of being oppressed or engrossed by any dread of increasing tortures and impending death, collected and strained all his faculties to bestow the purest advice, that the lips of friendship could utter, on a woman who had little merited such affectionate, such a generous attention. Oh, Harriot! if I formerly beheld him with ungrateful indifference, he is now the object of my idolatry. Alas! what tears have I shed, in reflecting that the cause of my not loving him as I ought to have done was my own unworthiness, and the not possessing a spirit so noble as his.—But I am wandering from my promise, which was, to give you a very full and complete narration of our conference.—I told him, that although I sincerely hoped and believed
I should

I should not marry again, yet I should treasure up his counsel, as children do a rich and beautiful pocket-piece, not for use, but for frequent contemplation, as an engaging and valuable memorial of regard and affection. I was on the point of uttering a very solemn promise on the religious article he mentioned, when his physician entered the room.—Enough! my dear Cornelia, cried the generous Sedley; and addressing himself immediately to his medical friend, he said, with an air of calm Christian triumph in his countenance, You find me, Doctor, as your benevolent spirit would wish to find a patient whom no art can restore. You find me with a bosom greatly relieved, by having just said all that I was anxious to say in this world. I thank Heaven, and this divine attendant (here he pointed to the unworthy Cornelia, with a tone and gesture so affecting that it made me fly to hide my face at the window), I am now so perfectly prepared to die, and so weary of these wasting pains, that I should esteem it a favour, if you could announce to me the certain hour of my release.—I now quitted the room, as I found myself unable to suppress my tears, and indeed I had great occasion to give vent to them in privacy. During the greater part of my poor Sedley's discourse to me, my whole frame was agitated with a conflict of opposite sensations: of reverence and regret; admiration of him, and abhorrence of myself. My heart indeed made several efforts to relieve itself by tears; but they were repeatedly checked by the reflection, that it was ungenerous and cruel to indulge

indulge them in his presence. With him therefore I wept but little ; as soon as I had escaped to my own chamber, I began to weep indeed, like a penitent who wished to efface the offences of many years. Reflecting however that I had still a more painful duty to discharge, I prayed most devoutly for strength and spirits to watch over the poor sufferer, with the most tender and incessant attention, through every remaining hour of a life so rapidly hastening to its close. I felt most sensibly on this occasion,

“ That but to ask more goodness is to gain ;”

for I soon returned to the poor object of my prayer, with the powers of my mind amazingly recruited. It is well for me that they were so, as on opening the door of his apartment I was struck with a scene that at first led me to suppose he had expired in my absence : this however was not the case ; but the poor exhausted patient had sunk into a little slumber, which his humane physician had requested him to indulge, with a promise to sit watching by his side. His late exertion had very visibly produced a considerable diminution of his strength, and the physician enjoined me to keep him as quiet as possible. We religiously obeyed this injunction, which was given on the Thursday ; and I believe he did not utter ten words on the two following days ; but on the fatal Sunday he requested me to join him in a short and fervent prayer, which he had composed and written for the purpose.— I could hardly articulate the words, which he pronounced in a low voice, yet very distinctly, though

though at that moment the cold sweat of death was standing on his forehead. In taking the paper from him, as he ended his devotion, I kissed his hand, which was indeed like clay; when, looking at me with inexpressible kindness and anxiety, he said: Remember, my dear Cornelia, remember that the caution I have given you is not only important to yourself, but to our children! ---the last word he could only speak in a confused murmur, and thus he expired in a sudden short agony of parental tenderness.-----Oh, my dear Harriot! if it is possible that your Cornelia can ever become such a wretch, as to let the just impression of all I have now related to you be effaced from her heart, be you my monitor! remind me ---but no, it is not possible: or if it were so, will not the two dear little beings, whom the departed angel has left me, serve me as perpetual remembrancers of his divine solicitude and affection for us all?---Alas! how little are they aware of the loss they have sustained! How affecting is the simplicity and ignorance of deep sorrow which infants discover, to those who are labouring under the pressure of recent grief; When I flew to the dear orphans on my return from Bristol, they caught indeed the infection of my tears, which flew afresh at the sight of the little fatherless creatures: but in the few days that have elapsed since my arrival here, they seem to have lost, not only all traces of sorrow, but all memory of the dead. In such a mere infant as Charles this is perfectly natural; but William surely is old enough to shew more feeling and recollection.—But what a wretch am I to blame my poor child, when I ought rather to consider

how often I have failed myself in affectionate duty to the departed! I wish my children to be gay and happy, and yet I am such a fool as to be wounded by the sight of the very cheerfulness that I wish them to enjoy. Oh, Harriot! my mind is full of nothing but confused and uneasy sensations; it is only your voice, the voice of true sympathy and friendship, that can calm my ruffled spirits, and reconcile me to myself—Your dear Audley is all goodness to me, and you know I think him a man who has hardly his equal in the world; but I believe the most tender and accomplished of men have no comprehension of the thousand little depressive and turbulent feelings, that agitate the heart of a woman who is dissatisfied with herself. But as Audley knows that no human being has manners more soothing than our beloved Harriot, he has kindly pressed me to relinquish my design of going immediately to Sedley-hall, for the more comfortable plan of returning with him to you.—As he tells me there is the greatest chance that the accident which happened to your foot may confine you for some weeks to a couch, I please myself with the idea that I shall be the partner of your confinement, and assist in your recovery. The feeling Audley insists on our bringing both my little orphans with us; and I am confident they will both be as welcome to my tender and warm-hearted friend as her desolate and affectionate

CORNELIA.

As we shall have settled our dismal but necessary business in a few days, I shall not write again—indeed it would be unconscionable in me to do
so,

so, as you will hardly have time to get through the melancholy volume I am now dispatching to you before you see us. I am the less disposed to apologize for the enormous length of my letter, as Audley is so busy in the kind discharge of his trust that he will only be able, as he tells me, to send you a short billet.

LETTER IV.

MR. TO MRS. AUDLEY.

MY dearest Harriot has a spirit to consider my thorough occupation in the service of her friend as a pleasing attention to herself. Pray have the goodness to accept this, not only as a sufficient, but as a handsome apology for a brief epistle from him whose heart has always a great deal to say to you.

We have in truth much serious business to get through before we can return to you: I say *we* ---because you will find that I have persuaded your too feeling Cornelia, for whom you are so anxious, to seek present shelter for herself and her little ones under your friendly wing. As I know how full of solicitude you are concerning her, after I have recommended to your immediate attention a certain fair creature with a crippled foot, who is the only being in the world that you are too apt to neglect, I must assure you, that although your friend has been much harrassed in mind, and fatigued in body, I cannot perceive any material diminution either in

her health or beauty. Nor can I find more than a single fault in her whole composition, and that is a great tendency to load her innocent self with iniquitous reproaches.---In another woman I might perhaps be tempted to think this affectation; but I know it is in your Cornelia, as you have truly told me, an excess of real sensibility. It is most certain, that all her conduct to the poor unhappy man just released, has not only been irreproachable, but highly meritorious; for, to speak freely of his infirmities, his distemper had rendered him peevish to such an excess, that, had Heaven itself furnished him with an attendant, he would have scolded the poor seraph for flapping even celestial plumes by the side of his couch.---I lamented his calamity, and revered his virtues; but though common humanity teaches us to forgive and pity the plaintive asperity of disease, I could not, I own, have attended my unfortunate relation with the unwearied patience of your Cornelia--of all human defects that exist without a bad heart, a querulous disposition is to me the most unamiable---in health and in sickness, it is surely inconsistent with reason and religion: it is, in short, my aversion; and if my lovely Harriot herself could acquire a habit of murmuring at the evils of life, instead of supporting them with that gentle and chearful fortitude for which she is famous, I am apprehensive that all her other perfections would not render her so inexpressibly dear as she now is, to

Her faithful and affectionate, &c.

P. S. I ought in justice to add, that poor Sedley's behaviour, in the three last days of his life, might atone for the peevishness of his three last

last years. He died indeed like a man; but I feel, that I should love his memory more, if I could say, with the same truth, that he lived so. When I observe the sincerity and the depth of Cornelia's concern for him, I feel angry with him that he did not render her life more easy, as I am confident he might have done so, in spite of his personal calamity. I must tell you, however, that in his will he has said and done for her every thing that could be expressive of gratitude, esteem, and confidence. Adieu---depend on seeing us on Saturday.

LETTER V.

FROM HENRY SEYMOUR TO EDMUND
AUDLEY.

I Have seen---I have talked with---I have touched her, and the fire of that electrical touch is still dancing in my veins, though I am sitting supperless in a dismal inn; where, instead of hastening either to supper or to bed, as the time of night would induce any less amorous or more fortunate mortal to do, I seize the stump of a pen that has served, I suppose, a hundred travellers to write their adventures, to give you a history of mine.---Ah! if your inhuman brother were not as cruel as a priest, I should have enjoyed the happiness of passing this night under the roof that protects my adored Cornelia;---yet I must say the pious Barbarian behaved very handsomely, all things considered.---Let me how-
ever

ever grow a little more methodical, and tell you these interesting occurrences in their due order.

To avail myself with the best grace imaginable of your kind hint where I might catch a sight of my Cornelia, I ordered post horses before I had perfectly perused your friendly letter, and hastened to the house of a certain honest dull 'squire, who resides about thirty miles west of your brother; and who, with many pressing invitations, could never tempt me before to pay him a shooting visit. Here I did penance for three days: my good host, you know, has a head like his gun-barrel, full of nothing but powder and shot; but had he possessed the wit of Athens, and the urbanity of Rome, I should, I believe, have thought him a woeful companion, while he detained me from that dear object of my idolatry, to whom my spirit had fled before my limbs could reach her. At last the three days, that appeared to me three centuries, expired, and I set forth for your brother's. Heavens! what a variety of inexpressible sensations I felt in passing Sedley-Hall! The sight of the hatchment, the open windows of Cornelia's chamber, and every object of the spot, struck in some forcible manner on my heart, and produced altogether a strange agitation, in which hope and fear, melancholy and exultation, were whimsically blended. I felt I know not what satisfaction in contemplating this deserted abode of the lovely mourner, that I wish to make the smiling scene of our future felicity; yet, as I passed the recent grave of poor Sedley, I felt a cold involuntary pang shoot athwart my bosom---Were I inclined to superstition,

stitution, I should say that his spirit smote me as I crossed his tomb, and forbade me to indulge the ambition of my heart : but my love is too warm and vigorous to be repressed by phantoms ; were a legion of ghosts to rise in her defence, they should not bar me from my pursuit : indeed such a legion would not be half so formidable as that single watchful dragon---your brother. I believe it was a scurvy dread of encountering his keen eyes in too long a tête-à-tête before dinner, which tempted me to loiter so in the precincts of Sedley-Hall ; I requested permission of the old porter there, to avail myself of the private road which leads through a little string of farms by which Sedley and your brother have very lately connected their respective domains. I contrived to reach Charles's gate just as the first bell was summoning the good folks of his household to a preparation for dinner, and as I entered the hall I met him just come in through the garden-door from a long and dirty walk. I felt, I must confess, more like a thief than a friend ; but putting the best face I could on my unexpected intrusion, I told him I had taken the liberty of stopping to dine with him, in my road from the west.--He gave me a very polite welcome : I thought I discovered in it more of civility than of joy ; and this idea did not tend to diminish my embarrassment ; but, to my inexpressible relief, in a few minutes he left me alone in his library, while he retired to change his dress. My heart now began to palpitate at the sound of a female foot in the room above. I had not dared to enquire after the widow ; and he, perhaps
from

from delicacy, had not named her to me. A servant luckily entering the library, I seized the opportunity of inquiring if there was any company in the house, and if Mrs. Audley was sufficiently recovered from her late accident to dine below. The fellow's answer was so exactly what I wished, that I considered him as my good angel, and was ready to worship him for his blessed intelligence. In crossing the hall, at the sound of the second bell, I caught the first sight of my angelic Cornelia, employed, angel-like, in supporting the uneasy step of her disabled friend. I had the delight of gazing on them for a minute unperceived, as they came slowly down stairs. In my first compliment I could not help remarking the very touching graces of the position in which I surprized them, and I expressed my wonder that the painters had not more frequently seized a subject so delightful as that of one lovely woman engaged in some act of friendly assistance to another. "O, cried your lively sister, I am afraid the painters, like the greater part of your sex, are a set of wicked creatures, who have no faith in female friendship; but you have luckily hit on a most seasonable piece of flattery; for I was saying to my kind friend here this morning, that if we ever sit for our pictures again, it shall be in the characters of Celia and Rosalind: for my part (she continued with that graceful vivacity which she possesses you know in a singular degree) I think there is more female heroism in confining yourself to wait on a cripple, than in wandering with an exile through the pleasant forest of Arden." My heart and tongue were both eager to exclaim:

"How

"How blest the man who might become the Oliver to your Celia!" But the sudden appearance of your brother annihilated at once my courage and my compliment. Our dinner, I believe, would have passed very heavily, had not your engaging sister gradually contrived to dissipate the general constraint, and to impart a portion of her own ease and cheerfulness to the little circle round her. She deserves in truth to be painted in the character of Rosalind, for she can indeed "do strange things," and seems to have "conversed with a magician most profound in his art, and yet not damnable." She read my heart and soul with that quick intuition with which clever women comprehend all the feelings of a man in love, before he can thoroughly decypher them himself. She rallied me on my visit to the shooting squire, and did it with that sportive delicacy of expression that she neither distressed me nor my tender widow by her railery; though I saw that she perfectly knew what magnet had drawn me to her table. As I am naturally sanguine, you know I soon felt myself inspirited by the kindness of her reception. I thought her eyes said to me, I read and applaud your passion for Cornelia; it is impossible for her at present to afford you any thing like encouragement; but I, who am her second-self, and know all her thoughts, will do all that I dare to inspire you with hope. This idea gave me new life: at the close of dinner a very whimsical little incident happened, which, trivial as it may appear, I must relate to you at full length, because it filled us all with no unpleasant emotion. While

the servants were setting the wine on the table, the eldest of the little Sedleys, the most lovely and wonderful child of five years that I ever saw, came running furiously into the room : his beautiful little countenance was illuminated with a brave indignation ; I never beheld such an image of an infant hero ; and we soon found that he came on a very heroic errand ; for, as soon as he could collect breath enough to speak, he made a very spirited appeal to the alarmed Cornelia against the tyranny of Nurse, who was going to inflict a corporal punishment that he thought very unjust on his little brother : I shall never forget the tone and manner of this marvellous boy—" My papa, said the infant hero, told me, that when he was gone to Heaven I should be the protector of little Charles, and nobody shall whip him for such a trifle !" He uttered this with such an enchanting air of infantine magnanimity, that I could not help catching him up in my arms, and exclaiming, " Heaven bless thee, sweet boy, thou wilt be one of the noblest-minded men that God ever created !" I perceived a tear of maternal transport rush to the eye of my Cornelia ; she was greatly affected, and was going to quit the room to regulate this petty disturbance ; but your brother stopt her, by insisting on his prerogative, as Lord paramount of the nursery, and confined her under the guard of his wife, while he and the little Sedley went together to examine and redress the grievance.

I defy you to guess in a twelve-month the high crime and misdemeanour by which the infant-culprit had excited the anger of his nurse—

Apropos

Apropos of nurse—You, whose idea of beauty is always connected with that of fertility, and who think a woman never so tempting as when she has a child in her arms; you, I say, would have been frantic at the sight of this beautiful nurse; and beautiful indeed you will suppose her to be, when I confess that I could not help staring at her in the presence of my adored Cornelia—it was a stare of admiration, not of licentiousness; and to prove to you that it was so, when I marry the lovely widow I will send you this admirable creature for your housekeeper. You dread, I know, the galling yoke of Hymen, and you can never find a more eligible substitute for a wife; she is completely in your favourite style of beauty—so rich, so luxuriant, so smiling—in short, a land flowing with milk and honey.

But to return to the infant culprit, and his inconceivable offence—Bless the gay little urchin! his crime was nothing more nor less than a kind hint to me to shorten the mourning of his mother, whom Nature fashioned for joy. It seems the lively urchin, who is still in petticoats, has taken a pleasant aversion to black; as he was just equipped to make his appearance in the parlour in a clean white frock and a new broad black sash, the rogue contrived to seize a large pair of scissars, and made several tremendous gashes in the gloomy decoration of his dress, which he could not reconcile to his joyous imagination. This had excited the anger and menaces of nurse, and the generous interference of his elder brother, who exulted not a little when

when Audley returned to us, as he soon did, with the little rebel in his arms, unwhipt, and beginning to smile again, with cheeks like two crimson roses, and with two forgotten tears standing like dew-drops in the middle of each. My divine Cornelia displayed a great deal of maternal tenderness, but with infinite good sense, and without a grain of affectation. She thought herself bound to chide the young delinquent a little for the sake of vindicating the honour and the authority of nurse. Your brother, with much good humour and pleasantry, played the advocate for his little namesake, and made him very happy by a promise to replace his hateful black ribband by a new one of sky colour. As there was no mode in which I could venture to make immediate love to my tender widow, except by caressing and trying to ingratiate myself with her children, you will suppose I was very assiduous in that attempt; and I was luckily so successful, that I soon became the prime favourite of both: never did favourite obtain the influence he wished, with less hypocrisy and adulation; I was in truth the idolater I professed myself. O my divine Cornelia, such is the magic of thy charms, they communicate an inexpressible attraction to all that belongs to thee! I protest to Heaven, I do not believe it possible for me to contemplate any offspring of my own either with admiration or with love superior to what I felt in gazing on thy children. You know, my dear Edmund, that I have always had a singular pleasure in the society of such artless little folks; it is one of my favourite amusements to observe

observe the free play of unsophisticated nature, in their looks, their attitudes, their expressions. The heroism of the elder Sedley enchanted me, and I was indebted to the younger urchin for a transport still more delightful. The sturdy rogue did not relish the mild rebuke of his mother, but began to pout like a young Achilles, and turned his face from her with a sulky grandeur. I undertook to negotiate a peace between them, and contrived, as proxy for the little half-penitent rebel, to imprint a kiss of submissive homage on her imperial hand—imperial I may truly call it, as I felt in touching it by this sportive manœuvre, that every fibre of my frame acknowledged its sovereign sway. I trembled at my own presumption, though in childish sport; and if my divine Cornelia had possessed less simplicity of character, or less understanding, my freedom might have produced a very foolish and very awkward scene; but, with a grace and delicacy of manner that no words can describe, she accepted my homage as the act of her child, and seemed not a little obliged to me in her heart for having furnished her with an early pretence for admitting the little half-sullen and half-reconciled rebel to her lap.

When the ladies withdrew, which they did not without a kind memento from your sister that I must drink tea with them before I proceeded in my journey, your brother, in a vein of arch hospitality, plied me with some excellent wine; not forgetting the health of his lovely guest: I drank freely, in the hope of imbibing courage enough to open my heart to him on the great

great object of its ambition ; but the sanctified rogue looked at me with so piercing an eye that he disjointed the exordium of an oration that I was studying for this purpose : I believe he comprehended my design, and my want of assurance to accomplish it ; for just as we were summoned to attend the ladies at their tea table, he surprised me by the following speech : ‘ My young
‘ and agreeable traveller, do not think me an
‘ inhospitable Barbarian for not asking you to
‘ pass the night under my roof. Come, Seymour, I will be very frank with you ; I trust
‘ you know enough of me to know that I detest
‘ every thing like disguise and duplicity. I am
‘ perfectly aware of your serious passion for the
‘ very beautiful and amiable woman now under
‘ my protection ; if the vehemence of love does
‘ not blind your own excellent judgment, you
‘ will perceive on reflection that I could not
‘ invite you to remain with us in this early period of her widowhood, without failing in the
‘ delicate regard that I owe to the character
‘ and the feelings of my lovely charge ; but
‘ give me your hand, and be assured, that so
‘ far from being an enemy to your well-placed
‘ affection, I only wish to find every possible
‘ reason that may enable me in due time to assist and befriend it.’ I caught his extended hand in a transport of gratitude, and could not help pressing it to my lips, as the hand of a gracious monarch who had just raised an aspiring and anxious subject to the pinnacle of honour and of joy. Alas ! my gratitude, as you tell me all my passions are inclined to be, was much

too precipitate. Hear how the Barbarian proceeded : " I am disposed to regard you, Seymour, as the bosom friend of a brother who is very dear to me ; you have many of his best qualities, but you have also (shall I say) his defect, or his misfortune : I see you understand me but too well, by the angry fire which is kindling in your countenance ; but dive into your own heart, and ask it fairly, if you have any just cause of anger against a man who is kindly shewing you what he knows to be the only obstacle in your road to happiness." I was abashed, I own, by the tenderness of this reproof ; the hasty and indignant speech I had upon my tongue died away without reaching my lips ; and I sat like a sinner in silent confusion, while the triumphant preacher thus continued his discourse : " You will acquit me of impertinence in hinting thus remotely at this very serious subject, when you know that I have some material information to give you concerning it. I need not tell you that my relation, poor Sedley, had, with all his infirmities, a strong understanding, a sincere attachment to religion, and a perfect sense of the misery which a want of that attachment introduces sooner or later into all the conditions of human life. In leaving a beautiful, young, and rich woman, in a world full of various temptations, he was too wise to expect or to wish that she should not marry again ; but his knowledge and his goodness induced him to express to her a peculiar solicitude that she should never marry an irreligious man : her resolution on this point is settled ; and though a
libertine

libertine might laugh at the idea, it has been settled by circumstances of such uncommon solemnity, that I question if any human temptations could lead her to renounce or forget it. The vows of a widow, you may tell me, are proverbially frail. I have not forgot our common acquaintance, the fair matron of Ephesus; but neither you nor I can look upon Cornelia as a creature of that class. If indeed, it were possible for her to waver, my own sentiments, and the duty I owe both to the dead and to the living, must oblige me to exert all the influence I possess to confirm her in so just and so important a resolution. You are very young, Seymour; and it is your misfortune, as it was your friend Edmund's before you, to be acquainted with a set of lively and too agreeable infidels, who have led you both, I fear, very wide of that rock upon which alone it is possible to build human happiness! You both, I am afraid, consider Religion either as a mask that hypocrites assume for their interest, or, at best, as a grave bauble for old age to play with. I trust the time will come, when you will both entertain a much truer idea of it, when you will both agree with me in thinking, that the very beautiful encomium which Tully bestows on Literature, is still more applicable to Religion, that it is "the friend of every season and situation, the guard and ornament of prosperity, the refuge of affliction." But, I ask your pardon, the ladies expect you; a single glance from the woman you love will have a much better chance of converting you than fifty sermons of mine. I will
only

only say, detach yourself from your profane associates, make yourself religiously worthy of the divine Cornelia, and I shall have infinite delight in placing her in the arms of a man so accomplished. And now, having ventured to do it thus metaphorically, let me literally shew you the way to her, by conducting you up stairs. Without waiting for a reply, which in truth I hardly knew how to make, he led me to the drawing-room. There was certainly much of the friend in his address to me, but there was also a bitter dash of the parson and the dictator that I was unable to swallow: as I followed him up stairs my proud splenetic fancy for a moment subdued even my love. I considered Cornelia herself, in a sarcastic point of view, as a new sort of Penelope, who was to make a trial of her lovers, not by a strong bow, but by the number of chapters they could read in the Bible; but the instant I beheld her lovely angelical figure at the tea-table, every particle of my pride and spleen evaporated. I flew, all joy and tenderness, to her side; and while her snowy hand was gracefully presenting a dish of tea to me, I was ready to exclaim, from the book I have just mentioned, "Intreat me not to leave thee" (or to return from following after thee) for "whither thou goest I will go: and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

But I repressed my rapture, or rather adopted a mode of indulging it, which, instead of being exceptionable, was sure of exciting sympathy and approbation. I talked to Cornelia of her children.

dren. I dwelt on the engaging preface of a finely manly character, which the little incident after dinner had shewn us in her elder boy. She listened to me with visible delight. I am convinced there is no mode of attacking the heart of a truly amiable widow so effectual as that of making her own child serve you in the character of Cupid. It has some advantages over the stratagem which Venus herself employed in behalf of Æneas, when she conveyed the fictitious Iulus to the lap of poor Dido, and the urchin, in seeming only to repose on her bosom, set it secretly on fire. As I think myself, without vanity, a much honestier man than the pious Æneas, who, like the religious rascals of every age, played a thousand dirty tricks in the name of Heaven, I trust that my dalliance in its end will be very different from his, and that I shall turn my widow into a happy wife, instead of driving the fair creature to hang herself; a fate that the generous Dido could not surely deserve, even for the extreme folly of having surrendered her charms to a sniveling, canting, treacherous hypocrite, who had the impudence to call himself a hero.

But I find, to my infinite surprize, that I have been writing half the night; it is time for me to get to bed, and no longer persecute either you or the poor chamber-maid and waiter; who, having exhausted all the little worn-out love that they have for each other, are yawning and cursing the strange gentleman for writing at such unseasonable hours. The conclusion of my day's adventure may be told in few words: after
a very

a very short hour's conversation, which turned chiefly on the education of children, and the force of female friendship, I tore myself from the presence of my divine Cornelia; and the pain that I felt in doing so, made me, I apprehend, very awkward and very ungracious, in taking leave of my host. Every circle of the wheels that conveyed me from his house seemed to raise a new reservoir of spleen in my bosom; and before I reached your old acquaintance, mine hostess of the Garter, who, by the way, is half dead with dram-drinking, I had devoted your pious brother to all the devils, for a perverse provoking Methodist, who would persuade a blooming widow, full of warm desires, not to admit an honest man to her bed till she had heard him repeat his Catechism. Adieu! I am as sick and as full of spight as a monkey half-starved by a miser who pretends to feed and caress it. I am however willing to persuade myself, that the greater part of my malady arises from my horror of the few ensuing months in which it will be impossible for me to catch another sight of my dear idol. You may do much towards my cure, if you can fill up this dreadful void in my existence by employing me in your service. I have no relish for the remedy that Ovid and Lucretius (great doctors both!) have prescribed for my disorder—I would rather avoid than go in quest of licentious pleasure. I feel indeed at present that friendship alone can be a tolerable substitute for love. Make my chastity, if you please, the slave of your incontinence, by appointing me the guardian to some pregnant

Sultana,

Sultana, whom you may wish perhaps to have conveyed out of the kingdom, that she may enrich your nursery without impoverishing her character. You may trust me with more confidence than the Grand Signor reposes in the chief of his black eunuchs. I would not give a straw for the possession of any woman in the world except my unrivalled Cornelia ; and her I must possess, or expire in the attempt. The season for that momentous experiment is yet very distant ; and let me repeat, that if you can contrive for me to fill up the horrid interim by giving me any friendly commission, if you can render me supportable to myself by being any ways useful to you, believe me, you will be the best of physicians to the untuned and turbulent spirits of,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER VI.

FROM EDMUND AUBLEY TO HENRY
SEYMOUR.

AS you seem sufficiently disposed to condemn the waywardness of your own agitated spirit, and your splenetic injustice to my brother, I will spare you the lecture you deserve on that copious topic. Matters of a more grievous nature demand our attention ; you wish me to furnish you with some interesting occupation !
Alas !

Alas! my dear Seymour, I am but too able to comply with your request: I can instantly employ you, not in my service indeed, but in that of humanity; if you have leisure, as I know you have spirit enough, to embark in a very mournful office, that must cost you a great deal of time, and may involve you in great trouble and expence; but, on the other hand, it will afford you the delight of achieving the most charitable exploit, and, of course, raise you high in the estimation of your divine Cornelia, But why do I trifle, in suggesting interested motives, to engage a heart like yours in the succour of a lovely afflicted creature, whom calamity has visited in a strange land; it is a beautiful foreigner, quite unknown to you, and bowed to the earth by the severest anguish that I ever saw a female bosom endure, whom I wish you (as soon as I can restore her a little more to herself) to convey back to the house of an ill-judging father, which she deserted in a moment of natural anger and ill-starred affection. I will give you the wretched story as briefly as I can: I believe you once saw a young friend of mine, whose name was Peverell; yes, I recollect you saw him, by your having remarked that he was the most perfect model of manly beauty that you ever beheld. Alas! my dear Seymour, tears drop upon my paper while I tell you that his fine form, which was every way inferior to his soul, has been suddenly dashed to pieces, by an accident too hideous for description! You, who know the warmth of my friendship, will conceive what I felt on the first horrible surprise of this intelligence.

gence. The unexpected death of a being, so young and so accomplished, must be distressing in any state; but there are peculiar circumstances that render the anguish of this event inexpressibly severe. Peverell loved me as you love me, and made me the confident, or rather the guide and ruler of his most secret concerns: in a very neat but small cottage, that belongs to me, and stands in a most sequestered spot about a mile from my house, he had deposited the concealed treasure of his once warm and gallant heart, the lovely foreigner I have mentioned. She is the child of an old and rich merchant in Genoa, in whose house my lost friend resided a considerable time: the young couple were instructors to each other in their respective languages, and soon conceived a vehement and mutual passion. Poor Peverell, whose mind had a strong natural bias to every thing honourable, thought seriously of marriage, and sounded the father. The old man took care to make both parties comprehend, that he would sooner put the girl into a grave, than into the arms of any man who was not a person of rank in his own republic; and she, in the height of her insulted love, very naturally thought, that a father deserved to lose his child for a sentiment so proud and inhuman: she persuaded the man she adored, who was indeed as worthy of her idolatry as a human being could be, to decamp suddenly with apparent indignation, promising to join him in secret at the first sea-port, and embark with him for England. Her character is one of the most singular that I ever met with in her sex: from the steady ardour

dour and energy of her mind, we might suppose her an antient Roman. On her landing here, she declined the immediate offer of a private marriage, from a generous idea that it might ruin the man she idolized, as she knew his dependence on a rich and ambitious uncle ; all I wish, she said, at present, is to have the delight of feeling myself indebted to you for innocence and freedom : had I remained with my father, he would have forced me into marriage with a wretch I despise ; and misery might have led me, as it leads many others, into all the enormities of guilt. I consider myself as your wife in the eye of Heaven ; and I care not for the opinions of earth : I have a pride and delight in continuing an absolute dependant on your love, because I know your heart sufficiently to be assured that you never abandon a woman for an excess of tenderness and generosity.

With these romantic sentiments, and with a marvellous and most engaging simplicity of life and manners, the lovely Giuliana had lived almost two months under my private inspection, attended by a little female orphan, whom she treats rather as a younger sister than a servant, as the girl, whose age is about twelve, is particularly endeared to her, by being the daughter of her deceased nurse, and of an unfortunate honest fellow who lost his life in trying to recover some shipwrecked merchandise of her father's. The charms, the character, and the situation, of Giuliana, soon made me love her as a sister or a child ; and I urged the poor ill-fated Peverell to try his influence with his uncle
Sir

Sir Richard, and, without confessing the secret of the lady's presence in England, to obtain his consent to marry the object of his ardent affection, by describing her, as she really is, the beautiful daughter of an opulent father. I had received a letter from my friend, who had left us for this purpose, to tell me, he saw little possibility of succeeding with his uncle ; and I was writing him a long letter of advice, when his faithful valet, a most excellent and kind-hearted fellow, entered my study, more like a spectre than a living man ; this good creature, whom I shall love as long as I exist, for his fidelity and feeling, had rode to tell me, as soon as possible, what he could not utter when he stood by my side ; he had only voice enough to say, " Oh, Sir—my dear master !"——and sunk in a kind of hysteric fit, from the united effects of sorrow, emptiness, and fatigue. When I had a little restored him, he related to me the horrid calamity occasioned by an unruly horse ; and as he described the death of my poor friend with all the strong pathos of genuine affliction, our tears flowed apace, when the feeling Robert suddenly exclaimed to me, " Ah, Sir, we have reason to weep for him, for he loved us both ; but what will that tender soul poor madam Giuliana do !—O Sir, I can never tell her he is dead !—No ; I had rather be dashed to pieces myself than tell her ! O Sir, you do not know how she loves him ! You may think she was his mistress, perhaps ; and to be sure I thought so once ; but it is no such thing ; they lived as pure as two angels, to my certain knowledge, Dear lady—nobody
knows

knows but myself how virtuously she loved my poor master ! and well she might ; for to be sure he was the handsomest and the kindest man in the world. Alas ! poor lady—left all alone in a strange country ! But as long as I live she shall never want a servant ; and I am sure, Sir, you will be a kind friend to her.”——This heartfelt eulogy and lamentation from an honest domestic proved of infinite service to me ; for the artless and pathetic manner in which the poor fellow delivered it, drew from me a very plentiful shower of tears, which rendered me much fitter than I should otherwise have been to engage in the mournful duty that he so feelingly recommended to my attention. My first care was to recruit the exhausted frame of the faithful Robert himself : having ordered him into a warm bed, I sat myself on the side of it, to be sure of keeping him quiet, and to meditate on the best plan of preparing poor Giuliana for a calamity which was soon to change her present cheerfulness into the deepest affliction. My meditation was soon disturbed, by the starts of poor Robert, who no sooner got a little slumber than it was broken by terrific visions of his master’s mangled body, or of the distressed Giuliana. As the latter seemed to dwell most on his spirit, I hoped to make the good fellow’s compassion administer to his own recovery, by telling him (what indeed I believed) that nothing could preserve his mistress from immediate distraction but his summoning up resolution enough to vouch for the truth of every thing that I should find it expedient to say to her, to prevent her obtaining any sudden

certainly of the horrible event. The honest fellow seemed to gain new life from this idea, and was very firm in his promises and his intentions. He conjured me to let him rise and attend me immediately to the cottage, lest in his return to Warwickshire he should be too late to attend the funeral of his master, whose poor mangled frame was to be deposited, as soon as possible, in the church where many of his gallant ancestors repose, and which stands within the pale of Sir Richard's Park. If poor Robert and I had been going to execution, we could not, I believe, have suffered more than we did, in our walk to the residence of Giuliana. It was still early in the morning; and my lovely charge, who has a great deal of devotional enthusiasm in her character, was singing to her harp one of the most simple sacred airs of Marcello; this was a cruel incident to me and Robert, for at the first sound of her pathetic melody half of the strength we had summoned for the occasion deserted us. Giuliana saw us from her window, and flew to let us in, with her usual vivacity and delight; but her features changed on the first glimpse that she caught of ours: "What is the matter!—where is my dear Peverell!" said the tender Giuliana, with all the wildness of terrified affection. I endeavoured, with all the firmness I could collect, to persuade her that my friend was only confined by a very troublesome, but not a very dangerous illness, and that, knowing our solicitude, he had dispatched the faithful Robert to give us a clearer account of him than he was able to write. She then declared

clared herself resolved to fly to him immediately, and attend him through his sickness, at any hazard of her reputation or her life. She uttered this resolution with such an air of fondness and magnanimity, that it overthrew all the promised fortitude of Robert, and the poor fellow burst into tears. "O Christ!" exclaimed the quick Giuliana, fixing her keen eyes upon him, "my Peverell is dead! yes, I see clearly he is dead, by that honest fellow's distress." I tried to remove her from Robert, and still to conceal from her the truth; but pushing me gently from her with a majesty of affliction that I could not resist, she said, with the most heart-piercing tone that I ever heard, "Robert, you never told me a falsehood in your life: I charge you, do not deceive me in a point so near my soul as the health of your dear master; answer me!—O God! you need not!—I see that he is dead!"—The solemnity of this appeal utterly overwhelmed the poor servant. He burst into a fresh agony of tears, and said to her, "O my dear lady, you are an angel; and though I resolved to tell you a lye for your own sake, I have not power to do it."—He then looked at me, as if dreading my rebuke; but seeing that I also was unable to repress my tears, the poor fellow seemed a little consoled for his pardonable weakness, and withdrawing from us as fast as he could, shut me and the desolate Giuliana into her little parlour, where we sat silent together for many minutes in a lifeless sorrow that seemed to absorb all the faculties of both.

I intended, my dear Seymour, to give you a most minute detail of all the conversation that has passed between me and this most interesting mourner; but two things, I find, will oblige me to contract the limits of this history: First, I am pressed for time, as I wish to bring you speedily to my aid; and secondly, the scenes I have already gone through for this unfortunate lovely creature have left so strong and recent an impression upon me, that I find I cannot relate them to you very minutely without suffering in the relation much more than you would wish me to suffer. I will only say, therefore, that I never beheld affliction which appeared to me so much the affliction of the heart as poor Giuliana's. Instead of bursting into those vehement expressions of distress which I expected from the natural vivacity of her character, her grief has been calm and concentrated in her bosom; she sheds no tears, and speaks as if there was hardly life enough in the organs of her voice to permit her to articulate. She made but one request to me—it was a very distressing one, yet made in such a manner that I would willingly have encountered any difficulties in the world rather than have barbarously thwarted this fond and natural desire of her heart and soul. You will probably guess that her desire was to fold once more in her arms the dear breathless idol of her affection; and you will think me little less romantic than yourself, when I inform you that I have really taken a long journey, and actually stolen at midnight into the residence of the dead, to gratify this angelic mourner.

Woe

Woe to the marble-hearted philosophers, who insult real sorrow by their pretended consolation, which the bosom of the afflicted is just as able to receive, as the lips of the dead are to open for a cordial ! The only way, I believe, to triumph over true grief of heart is, to indulge it in all the vehemence of its fond desires ; it was by this method that I have gained an influence over the feeling spirit of the afflicted Giuliana, which I could not otherwise have acquired. But you will want to know some particulars of our secret admission to the tomb. I contrived it thus : I let the faithful Robert return with all the expedition he wished, and supplied him with money to purchase for me the private assistance of the sexton. This man happened to be my old acquaintance, as he had often attended me and my poor departed friend, in our shooting parties, when Sir Richard was abroad, and his young nephew had the command of his domains. The honest fellow lives in a cottage, just without the park pale, by the side of the high road, and picks up some shillings in a year by shewing his church, in which there are a few curious old monuments. Being very desirous to keep our expedition as secret as possible, we managed so as to reach the cottage of the sexton between eleven and twelve at night. The faithful Robert had not only met us at the Inn we appointed, but, to shew his uncommon solicitude for his afflicted mistress, had contrived, by his intimacy with the innkeeper, to act himself as our postilion. This unexpected and touching proof of delicate attention paid to her sorrow by this feeling

feeling domestic, drew from Giuliana the only tear that I observed her to shed in our journey. As we found the sexton perfectly prepared to attend us, we proceeded on foot to cross the park-style, and walked by a triple row of old and venerable trees that lead to the church. The night was particularly clear, and the moon in her fullest quarter; never in my life had I taken a nightly walk so affecting. Giuliana leant on my arm; but a sacred horror seemed to have sealed up the lips of both, and we glided into the church as silent as two ghosts returning to their graves: I had stored my pocket with drops and cordials, lest any weakness or panic should oppress the nerves of my dejected and almost lifeless companion; but, to my surprise, she discovered nothing of that chill terror which the time and the scene were so likely to inspire; on the contrary, animation seemed to rekindle in her frame, in proportion as she drew nigh to the dear source of her sorrow. I confess my own heart was chilled within me, when the sexton, who now preceded us with a glass lantern, with which the careful Robert had supplied him, opened the massive and hollow-sounding door of an extensive vault, that holds two regularly marshalled ranks of the dead, in mouldering magnificence; in this vault there are two iron grates, for a circulation of air, and it happened, as we entered, that the beams of the moon were darted through one of these on a fresh coffin of sky-coloured velvet and silver ornaments. Giuliana sprung from me at the sight of it, and embraced the coffin with a passionate vehemence; she

she soon found that the lid had been left unfastened for her gratification, and having seized the right hand of my poor departed friend she clapt it wildly on her own heart. A ghastly smile of mingled agony and delight was now visible in her pale face : I began to fear from her looks and gesture that her brain was turned by the impression of the scene ; and I repented my indulgence, especially when she requested, with the air of settled madness, permission to live in that vault, promising not to destroy her own life, but to receive a daily supply of bread and water from the poor sexton. I never endured a moment so distressing : I was obliged to speak to her in a tone of authority, and indeed of reproach, very foreign to my heart. “ Have you forgot, said I, that Peverell was my friend as well as yours, and that his spirit now enjoins me to guide and protect you ? is it not ungrateful to us both, to reward me thus for indulging the request of your affliction ? ” She fell on her knees at this rebuke, and kissed my hand ; then joining it to the cold hand of her dead lover, she kissed them both together, and thus took a most affecting oath of implicit obedience to me. I hastened to use the power I had gained by leading her out of the vault, but was soon distressed by a new petition to return to it, for the sake of taking a lock of hair from the corse ; but I insisted on giving this commission to the faithful Robert, who had attended us. I hurried my tender charge, as fast as possible, into the open air. I must reserve all the particulars of our return till I have the comfort of seeing you, which I
trust

trust will be very soon. Let me add, however, that I am now very far from repenting of this mournful expedition : I take, indeed, an honest pride in the part I have acted ; as I am convinced that nothing could have so well prepared my disconsolate companion for regulating her future conduct as I wish her to do ; she has still in her countenance and manners the deep traces of intense affliction ; but I can perceive that her grief is gradually melting into a tender and divine melancholy : as long as Peverell lived, I kept his secret so faithfully, that Giuliana was unknown even to my sister Lucy, who was under my roof at the time of the fair stranger's arrival at her cottage. I had many reasons for this reserve ; but the death of my friend and the affliction of this lovely mourner having removed them all, I have borrowed the assistance of my sister in consoling Giuliana ; they have contracted a great regard for each other, and I had thoughts of going abroad myself with my sister that we might both enjoy the delight of restoring this ill-fated, but amiable fugitive, to the house of her father : some very important private concerns of our family will render this project impracticable, and I know not the man on earth to whom I would willingly resign this delicate office except yourself. Perhaps it would interfere too much with your present very anxious pursuit ; at all events I intreat you to hasten to me, and let me at least have the satisfaction of consulting you in person on a business of infinite moment to the afflicted heart of

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

FROM HENRY SEYMOUR TO EDMUND
AUDLEY.

YOU, and your divine Giuliana, may command me to the extremity of the earth; but why send her back to an old wretch of a father, who can never deserve such a child! More of this when we meet. There is, as you justly express it, a majesty in her affliction, that enforces the homage of my soul; and if I can render her any kind of service, she may depend on finding a most obedient, respectful, and affectionate vassal, in

Your devoted SEYMOUR.

I hope to reach your gate in a few hours after this hasty billet. If any circumstances should make it proper for the faithful Robert to quit the service of Giuliana, I beg that he may live and die in my household. At present I am proud of considering myself as his fellow-servant. Adieu.

L E T T E R VIII.

FROM MISS AUDLEY TO MRS. AUDLEY.

PRAY quit the apprehensions which you good souls have conceived, concerning the morals and the discretion of our dear brother Edmund. Believe me, the fine story of his being entangled with an Italian mistress is a fiction of that artful toad-eater in petticoats who related it so circumstantially, and who is, you know, in my opinion, the great nuisance of your neighbourhood. Like most of her mischievous stories, it cuts like a sword with a double edge, from being a mixture of falshood and of truth. Yes, you may look as grave as you please upon it, but it is even so : we have had an Italian lady concealed in our cottage ; but let me add, that if one of our family had been tempted to sleep with her, it would have been your humble servant Lucy, and not the innocent Edmund : not but my sage and systematic batchelor, as he styles himself, is sometimes a traitor to his own Platonic philosophy ; yet, as he comes to me, like a culprit to his confessor, for spiritual admonition, I have hopes of working a very complete reform in his conduct, though none of seeing him a married man. To confess my own self-interested nature very frankly, as we live on such pleasant terms together, and as I think the chance a thousand to one
against

against his being so fortunate in marriage as a certain married brother of mine of your ladyship's acquaintance, I have no very earnest desire that Edmund should cease to be a bachelor; yet, if he were really enamoured of this fair Italian, who has frightened you and your good man so dreadfully, as I am absolutely in love with her myself, and have not alas the power of metamorphosing myself into a husband, I should most vehemently wish for Edmund's success. After this honest declaration, if you are not dying with an increased curiosity to know all that I can tell you concerning this bewitching "she of Italy," to borrow a phrase from Shakspeare, you must certainly be something more than mortal.

And now am I ready to quarrel with my foolish self for having talked with such an air of flip-pant, unfeeling levity, of a most admirable creature, in the utmost grief and anguish, perhaps, that a human bosom can experience; but the truth is, your alarm concerning the philosophical Edmund's being suddenly ruined by a foreign courtesan hit my fancy so ludicrously, that I could not help smiling, though with a heart full of sorrow, for our lovely Giuliana. How to tell you who our lovely Giuliana is I hardly know, except by repeating, that she is the most afflicted and the most interesting creature I ever met with; but, as so brief a description will not, I am sure, content you, I must add, that she is the daughter of a rich merchant in Italy, and was tempted, by the most dangerous and insinuating of all modern tempters, Love, to visit England, with that wonderfully handsome and unfortunate
young

young friend of Edmund's, whose calamitous death you mention so feelingly. Poor Peverell had deceived himself with the hope of being able to make his stately proud uncle receive, and even love Giuliana as his niece. The horrid accident we are all lamenting hurried him out of life, not only before he had made any successful advances in this chimerical project, but before he had taken care, as he certainly ought to have done, to provide for the subsistence of this lovely stranger, in case of such a calamity as it has pleased Heaven to inflict; yet, full as he was of all the sanguine hopes that generous love can inspire, added to the natural high spirits of youth in perfect health, we cannot wonder that he forgot to reflect on his mortality. The consequence, however, of such forgetfulness might have been cruel indeed to the desolate object of his affection, if it had not pleased Heaven to raise a guardian, I might say a new and better father to the distressed Giuliana, in our kind-hearted Edmund. The lovely romantic girl, who perfectly understood her lover's absolute dependence on his uncle, had repeatedly declined a private marriage, from a very generous resolution, of not becoming the wife of the man she adored while there was a chance that such a step might involve him in ruin. She had, indeed, two events to expect: Sir Richard is neither young nor healthy; his consent, or his death, might have settled our beautiful stranger in the station she deserved to fill. There appeared a fair chance, that one or other might soon improve her situation; and, as she had an entire reliance on the truth and generosity

rosity of her lover, she was contented to abide this chance, in what most women would have thought a wretched and humiliating obscurity, though under the protection of Edmund.

I must do my brother the justice to say, he kept the secret of these unfortunate lovers with so much fidelity and address, that I knew nothing of Giuliana, though she had resided many weeks in a neighbouring cottage, till the season of her distress. Edmund, who has indeed behaved to her like a father, then made us known to each other, in the hope, which I have not, I trust, utterly disappointed, that I might assist him in the very difficult task of healing, or rather soothing, the wounded spirit of this lovely mourner. As you are now acquainted with the singularity of her situation, you may, in some measure, conceive the intense grief occasioned by a loss so unexpected, which rendered her the most desolate of beings.

When she ventured to quit the house of her father, whose ruling passion is money, she made it a point of honour to leave him her jewels, and to take from him nothing of value, except indeed herself—a treasure that he seems never to have estimated as he ought. As to her departed lover, his heart was much richer than his purse: his allowance from the sparing Sir Richard never equalled his expences; and his love being of too noble a kind to shew itself in costly trifles, he had made his mistress no such presents as might on a sudden exigence be converted into gold. Thus, if my brother had not stood like a good angel by her side, the young, the beautiful, the chaste,

chaste, and lately opulent Giuliana, might have been reduced, with her little Abigail, a sweet orphan girl of twelve years, either to beg her way home to an enraged father, or to seek subsistence among strangers by some humiliating occupation. The bare idea of such a lovely creature falling suddenly into such penury and wretchedness makes my heart shudder whenever it recurs to my mind; but our tender Giuliana never felt her misfortune in this hideous point of view; she felt only the loss of him by the light of whose countenance alone she appeared to exist; and she felt it so intensely, that Edmund assures me it was the passionate desire of her soul to be shut up from the world, and end her existence in the vault that holds the shattered frame of her ill-fated lover. I will tell you, one day or other, all that our dear Edmund has done to indulge the wildness of her affliction; at present I must only say, that no Don Quixote ever exerted more generous spirit to restore a distressed fair-one to her living Lord, than our brother has done to gratify the intense grief of this true and engaging mourner for the gallant youth she has lost. His success has been equal to his good intention. I never saw gratitude expressed by any human being in a manner so touching as Giuliana's in expressing hers to us both. It is not by saying she is obliged to us, but by shewing, in a thousand undescribable ways, that her gratitude is by no means inferior to her excessive affliction; by letting us see that she makes her poor broken and bleeding heart submit itself entirely to the guidance of my brother; and that he has gained
an

an influence like that of Heaven over her actions and even her will. I have really had a great, though melancholy delight in contemplating the very singular regard which compassion on his part, and sorrow and gratitude on hers, have produced between them. I never beheld any human attachment more affecting; and Edmund, you know, has imparted to me his habit of moralizing on our passions and affections. My contemplations, I confess, are very apt to be infected with feminine weakness; and to tell you an honest truth, I could not behold the influence of Edmund and Giuliana on each other without finding an idea of their union perpetually obtruding itself on my reluctant mind; yet, as I own the idea was very unsuitable to the time and circumstances, I never mentioned it to either, and I will pawn my life that it never occurred either to the one or the other. Edmund is so very anxious to have this tender unhappy fugitive safely restored and reconciled to her father, that we had thoughts of taking a trip to Italy, for the satisfaction of escorting her home. How charming would this have been, to have united humanity and pleasure so delightfully! But, alas! the provoking legal business, which we now find in such a train as to require our presence in England for some months, is an insuperable bar to this captivating project. Edmund, however, has been so fortunate as to find a charitable proxy, to his heart's content. Giuliana and her little attendant are set forth this morning on their return to Italy, under the guidance and protection of his friend Seymour, who, after passing a few days

days here, has undertaken, in the most delicate and generous manner, not only to convey the two forlorn foreigners to their own country, but to accomplish a reconciliation between Giuliana and her father, exactly in the way that my brother had devised.

So you really think that your sweet friend Cornelia has conceived, without knowing it, a real passion for Seymour. I am not at all surprized at it; especially after the diverting anecdotes you tell me of the fondness which her children have conceived for this engaging mortal. I own, if I were a widow myself, nothing would win me so soon as the perceiving a man beloved by my children, and of course very fond of them. I believe Seymour is perfectly sincere in his present extreme passion for the widow; but were I in her case, I should tremble for the issue of the expedition in which he has so gallantly embarked. To travel so far, by land and by sea, with a most beautiful creature, in the most interesting of all possible situations!—Well, I will only say, if he continues steady in his attachment to your Cornelia, he is a Phoenix of a lover, and deserves to be cherished accordingly.

As our dear Edmund is apt, you know, to be very profound in his projects of benevolence, he has a double view in committing Giuliana to the care of his friend. But, to explain this, I must tell you a circumstance in which your good husband will triumph not a little, as it affords a striking confirmation of his favourite maxims, concerning the use and efficacy of devotion in every period of life. Pray desire him, therefore,

to take notice, that this piece of information is addressed particularly to himself; and he, I am sure, will not suppose me mistaken, when I tell him, that although Edmund's very tender and parental attention to the desolate Giuliana had great influence in soothing her sorrow, yet, in truth, it is religion alone that has enabled her wounded spirit to surmount the calamity which appeared to crush it. From all the particulars of her story, I am convinced that she felt for the unhappy Peverell as pure and as strong a passion as the female bosom is capable of feeling. The devotional turn of her mind has converted her love into literal and surely happy and pardonable adoration. She considers this dear object, not as hurried out of life to leave her without a guardian, in the thorny and dangerous paths of the world, but as transported to Heaven, to secure for her, and to share with her, everlasting felicity. She thinks herself not only awakened and directed by this angelic guide to save her own soul, but to attempt and accomplish the salvation of her father. She is persuaded, and perhaps with some truth, that both have been deficient in their respective duties, from being equally blinded by two different deceivers, Interest and Love. Your husband would be marvellously delighted by her pathetic eloquence on this devout subject. Indeed, I hardly think it possible for the most hardened Infidel to hear her without tears, and without paying the lovely preacher at least such a compliment as Agrippa paid to Paul. It is on the sweet magic of this heavenly sorrow that our good Edmund has built some very friendly hopes
in

in behalf of Seymour. He is willing to believe that a long attendance on this engaging mourner, this divine enthusiast, may cure that too light though agreeable and generous young man, of the alarming irreligious levity, which is the only blemish in his attractive character. For my own part, I must say, though I think the observation does not become a spinster, I fear there is more benevolence than probability in Edmund's idea. I am afraid the expedition may rather lead this too lively creature into a profane passion for the beauty before him, than into a religious attachment to an absent fair. I must however do him the justice to say, that he shews the most delicate respect to the grief of Giuliana. But his esteem for her devotion I can guess, by one of his sprightly remarks to me concerning her present views. The rogue said, he did not apprehend that any piety was strong enough to cure a young woman of Love, or an old man of Avarice. I should add, however, that after opposing Giuliana's return to the old miser, to use his own words, he became an absolute convert to the reasoning of my brother, and appeared to sympathise with him most cordially in his wish of reconciling the dear lovely devout girl, and her outrageous father.

I am charged, by Seymour, to solicit both you and your Cornelia to honour him with some commissions abroad; and I have promised to convey to him your respective commands. As your friend has so sweet a voice, I think you cannot do better than desire a complete collection of all the airs sung by our dear Giuliana. My brother

ther says, she has an infinite variety of songs, unknown in our country, and wonderfully sweet. Besides their intrinsic merit as musical compositions, they will have an additional charm to all of us, in recalling the lovely image of Giuliana to our minds. The attractions of her character are such, that even you and Cornelia, who have never beheld her beauty, will yet have a pleasure in thinking of her, when Edmund and I have had sufficient opportunities to tell you a thousand little interesting anecdotes relating to her short residence in our country.

At present I must add but a few lines to this enormous packet, for which I shall hope to be as amply repaid, by a full history of all the new discoveries that you may have made in the heart of Cornelia. Pray send, if you dare, a few animating words for me to dispatch to the generous guardian of Giuliana on his travels. There is some virtue in this petition, for it may keep him constant to his present chaste passion, to give him some prospect of future success. I am ready to laugh at myself, in perceiving what a lively interest I, who have renounced love on my own account, am still ready to take in the loves of my acquaintance. I am, I think, like an unlucky gamester, who, having narrowly escaped the utter wreck of his fortune, and having solemnly sworn never to touch a card again, yet loiters round the tables, and has an odd pleasure in peeping into every hand that he can catch a sight of. Well, Heaven bless all the anxious adventurers, say I, in this round game of chance, that I have declined for ever. You, my dear Harriot,

riot, are like a lucky mortal at commerce, who has triumphantly cried, "Content;" perfectly secure that no one can exhibit a richer hand. The contemplative Edmund says, that in every numerous family there should be one maiden aunt, and one batchelor uncle, to buy toys for the children, and to lecture the parents. We are both steady in our purpose to fill these humble, but useful and quiet departments of life, and to remain, as the great philosopher whom I have just named expresses it, in a wise and armed neutrality, between the joys and afflictions that are continually treading on the heels of each other both in love and wedlock—Adieu.

LETTER IX.

MRS. AUDLEY

[in answer to the preceding.]

YOU are a charming good creature, my dear Lucy, to relieve us so soon, and so effectually, from our apprehensions. You have made us laugh at our own moral panic, as I may call it, concerning the continence of Edmund. You have made us weep at the very bitter affliction of your interesting Giuliana; and you have made us laugh again by the pleasantry of your sage reflections

fections upon single blessedness. You may talk as you please of your wise intentions ; but I hope destiny has more benevolence to man, than to have devoted such a delightful creature as my dear correspondent to a life of celibacy. You have, indeed, had a narrow escape, after much agitation of the heart, from matrimonial misery, with a partner who shewed himself in a fortunate, though painful moment, unworthy of the blessing that in the blindness of our deluded affection we all wished him to possess. You felt, and you supported, the disappointment in a manner that has rendered you inexpressibly dear to all who have the happiness of your friendship ; and I trust it will be your lot to receive a richer reward in the love of some happier man, as perfectly deserving of you as the wretch I allude to was unworthy. Deuce take the artful fellow ! I hate to think of him ; yet the remembrance of all his base deceptions will often creep over my mind, like a chilling mist with a damp easterly wind. There is certainly much more true heroism in your soul, my dear Lucy, than in mine ; though my good man often pays me compliments on my fortitude, I could not have passed through such scenes as you have had to sustain, with half your spirit, or half your good sense. I rejoice to find that you still retain the natural tender gaiety of your heart, and form to yourself an agreeable amusement in contemplating the affections of your acquaintance.

I am most willing to impart to you the intelligence you request ; yes, yes, I have made discoveries in the bosom of our Cornelia. Do not the philosophers

philosophers talk of little spots in the moon that they affirm to be burning volcanos ! I can perceive, without the aid of any marvellous glasses from that most obliging and polite man of deep science. Mr. Herschell, a spot of this flaming nature in that chaste luminary the heart of our lovely widow. Heavens ! what a crimson cheek would she have, were she to peep over my shoulder, and peruse this saucy sentence ! But 'tis even so ; love is like murder, not to be concealed, however obstinately it may be denied. The dear dainty hypocrite is angry with me, when I tell her so ; yet I could give you a thousand little unquestionable evidences in support of my charge ; but I have only time to tell you one, that struck me yesterday : a gentleman happened to dine with us, who has passed the greater part of his life abroad. Cornelia engaged him in a conversation apart, and I accidentally discovered that Genoa had been a capital subject in their discourse : she had enquired if English travellers had ever been tempted to marry there by the fair natives of that opulent city : when I, jestingly, alluded to this enquiry, which she did not suppose me to know, she blushed in such a violent degree, that as we were alone I could not help seizing her hand, and exclaiming, in a very odd sort of emotion, between a laugh and a cry, " Well, my dear, you shall have him, let him be Jew or Gentile." This led us into much serious conversation, in which, with more frankness than she had ever shewn upon this subject before, she confessed—Here, Lucy, I see you smile, in full and rogueish expectation of perusing
ing

ing the word Love ; that, indeed, would have been a confession worth listening to ; but not so fast, my dear girl, we are not yet arrived at that stage of the disorder ; no, we confessed only, that of all the single men in the world this lively and generous traveller, Mr. Seymour, is the most agreeable in figure, in manners, in conversation ; but as to love, no : positively, seriously, and by all the unquestionable asseverations that ever passed the chaste lips of widowhood, we have not the slightest spark of that fiery passion in our frame : Mr. Seymour may pass his whole life in Italy, and we should feel no farther solicitude concerning him, than what every amiable mind must feel for the welfare of an accomplished young man, who engaged so readily in a rare and noble act of humanity. And so, my dear Lucy, so “ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” She means all that she says, for her honest lips have not the power of uttering even an equivocation, if her mind was capable of conspiring with her heart to meditate disguise. She believes herself perfectly from the soft infection. But if I know any thing of love, or human nature, she is actually fallen into the maelady of poor Dido ; and as Virgil and Dryden say of that hapless Queen,

“ She seeds within her veins a flame unseen.”

Oh, pray order for us the collection of Giuliana's songs ; Love is an admirable music-master. Do not fail to send us the earliest tidings you receive of the interesting travellers ; you may tell Seymour, from me, that if he will but grow
half

half as devout as he is agreeable, there is nothing honourable which he may not hope from the most scrupulous of our sex. I have still a thousand things to say to you, but I must reserve them till I write again: the youngest of my dear little chits has been ailing these two days; and I must throw aside my pen to take the poor little invalid in my arms.—Ah, Lucy, the taxes on matrimonial happiness run very high! Adieu.

LETTER X.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

HERE we are, safe at Dover; and after writing the inclosed extempore translation of what the grateful Giuliana dictated to me in her own language, I have hardly time to add a word more, as they are hurrying us on board the packet, lest we lose our passage. Yet I will say, I am inexpressibly obliged to you for the very high, though mournful delight, I receive in executing the office with which you have honoured me. I now indeed subscribe to your maxim, that the melancholy pleasures are far superior to the gay ones. What a heavenly creature is this Giuliana! How willingly would I expire by any death, to receive from my adored Cornelia such genuine

genuine tenderneſs as Peverell receives from this angelic mourner ! How nonſenſical, how frantic, would this idea appear, to beings who never were in love, and have no feelings for the delicious extravagance of that ſublime paſſion ! yet it reigns at this moment in full force over my heart and ſoul. But here is a ſecond ſummons from the captain of the packet ; ſo farewell.

L E T T E R X I.

GIULIANA TO EDMUND AND LUCY
AUDLEY.

THOUGH I borrow the hand and the language of my generous conductor, it is with my own poor and broken, but not ungrateful heart, that I ſend theſe haſty thanks and tendereſt remembrances to you both, dear friends ; deareſt and kindeſt of all living natives of this dear land, that I am going to quit for ever, though it holds in its boſom the loſt treaſure of my ſoul. Do not think that your Giulia-
na, whom you have ſo benignly laboured to reſcue from deſpair and diſtraction, begins to murmur again in wicked forgetfulneſs, either of your moſt friendly admonitions, or of thoſe ſa-

cred suggestions inspired into her wounded bosom by that

"Alma felice che sovente torna
A consolar le mie notti dolenti
Con gli occhi suoi che morte non ha spenti."

PETRARCH.

[That blessed soul that often returns to soothe my nights of sorrow with his eyes that death has not extinguished.]

No, my dear friends, let me assure you, since I know it will please your benevolent hearts, that I have rather gained than lost both composure and fortitude of mind; and my bodily health is far better than I thought it could possibly be on such an embarkation as this. I will confess to you, that the first sight of the sea, which I am to re-pass, affected my whole frame in a manner that no words can express; it brings me, with such new force, the dear image of him who led me across it to your shore :

"Rende a gli occhi a gli orecchi il proprio obbietto
Senz'l qual imperfetto
E lor oprar, e'l mio viver' e morte."

PETRARCH.

[It restores to my eyes and to my ears their proper object, without which their functions are imperfect, and my life is death.]

Pardon me, dearest friends, for perpetually using the words of a tender and heavenly poet
of

of my country, who, though his loss and calamity was not equal to mine, has powerfully expressed the feelings of my affliction. It seems to me as if my Peverell had a presentiment of what was to befall me when he delighted in making me recite to him the most pathetic compositions of our favourite Petrarch: it seems as if he foresaw that the melancholy verses of that exquisite poet would one day be a sort of soothing magic to the heart on which he so diligently imprinted them. Such indeed they are to me now; and especially all the many heavenly passages that so forcibly represent to me,

—“ il mio fido e caro dute
Che mi condusse al mondo or mi conduce
Per miglier via a vita senza affanni.”

[My faithful and dear guide, who once conducted me in this world, and now conducts me by a better road to a life without pain.]

But my devout attachment to this dear celestial guide of my soul must not make me ungratefully omit to thank you for the assistance I receive from that friendly and generous conductor to whose care you have so kindly recommended me, and who is so good as to make my poor thoughts intelligible to you. He is so indulgent to my sorrow, and shews so much sympathy in it, that I almost persuade myself he is a brother of my dear Peverell. Ah! my heart tells me, that every gentle spirit of your beloved country must be considered by me as his brother. If any such should happen to be overtaken by calamity in the

land where I must pass the residue of my mournful life, what satisfaction should I have in administering to their distress; and thus proving myself ever mindful of those infinite and inexpressible obligations which my dear English father Edmund and his angelic sister have heaped on your poor devoted Giuliana!—Dear England, and dearest of friends, adieu! I kiss your charitable hands with the most impassioned gratitude and reverence—*Encor adio.*

Thus far Giuliana—I cannot close this paper, as her secretary, without adding, in this spare corner of it, a short ejaculation, imploring the genius of this divine woman, and the spirit of Petrarch, to forgive me for all the injustice I have done to their rich, delicate, harmonious language, by the poverty and roughness of my rapid extempore translation.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XII.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

Calais.

AFTER a smooth, but rather a slow passage, we are, at length in France! thank Heaven. You want not any description of French people, or French buildings; if you did,

did, I fear the accounts you would gain from me would be very unsatisfactory. I can see and hear nothing but my marvellously interesting fellow-traveller. What a divine creature she is ! how admirable in her form and faculties ! how exquisite in her sensations ! what efforts of heart and soul has it cost her to tear herself from the land that holds her buried lover ! I can never forget her looks and gesture as she quitted our coast. The last thing she did on shore was to stoop and pick up a pebble, which she kissed devoutly, and then pressed into her bosom : a million of words could not have expressed so much as she did by this little gesture. I believe I should have thought it fantastic in another woman ; but in Giuliana it appeared simple, graceful and affecting, in the highest degree. What a rich fund of singular and entirely new delights have you afforded me, my dear Edmund, by this commission ! Had a prophet told me, two years ago, that I should at this time be travelling with a young beauty, not connected with any living mortal ; that I should hear, day after day, the softest language from the most lovely lips ; that I should have every opportunity for the most tender familiarities, and yet that I should sit by the side of this fair creature without thinking that she had such a thing as a lip belonging to her, without feeling a single intimation from all the warm and wanton blood in my veins that I had a daughter of Eve within the reach of my embrace ; had a prophet, I say, told me this, I should have laughed at him for a lying oracle, and have informed him, that his prediction

prediction was not very consistent with general nature, and still less so with my constitution: yet this is truly the case. Giuliana seems to have realized the idea, in a charming song of Parnell's, to have been a woman to Peverell alone, and to be an angel to all the rest of mankind. I may, in truth, apply to her the expression of her darling Petrarch, and say, that her eyes seem to purify the air, and to banish every evil thought from her presence. You know I have long been fond of the Italian language; and I thought myself an intelligent admirer of Petrarch, that insipid and wearisome sonneteer in the estimation of ordinary readers, that most exquisite and enchanting of all poets to every refined spirit under the immediate influence of sorrow or of love. But, though a tolerable proficient in his language, I really never felt the magic of Petrarch till I heard him recited by Giuliana; and for this very high delight I am partly indebted to accident. In drawing out her purse, at Canterbury, to bestow her charity on a venerable old mendicant, Giuliana let fall a most elegant diminutive copy of this celebrated poet: this, as she herself informed me, had been the constant pocket-companion of her dear Peverell: the book, as if in sympathy with its master, had even received a wound from the horrid accident which occasioned his death; and his servant, the faithful Robert, thinking, very justly, that his tender-hearted mistress would prize it as a sacred invaluable relique, had begged, preserved, and presented it to her. I was highly pleased with this little anecdote; and particularly

ticularly happy to catch a subject for conversation that I knew to be in harmony with the feelings of my afflicted companion. I made Petrarch, therefore, the main topic of our discourse; I feigned myself puzzled by some passages, for the pleasure of leading Giuliana to amuse herself by a kind explanation of them. Heavens! if the soul of the poet was conscious of our conference concerning him, what delight must he have received from the eloquent praise of his lovely commentator! When she found I had some relish for her darling author, she began to indulge herself in various quotations, so pathetically apposite to her own condition, and delivered with such perfect eloquence, that I seemed never to have been acquainted either with true poetry, or true elocution, till that moment. I should fill a volume were I to enumerate and give you a full account of all these. Indeed you have a little specimen; but, without her voice, and with my translation, a most imperfect specimen of them, in *her letter* from Dover. I must however tell you one of her quotations, which struck me most forcibly; but let me first mention the occasion that produced it. You know I join with you in detesting that cruel and absurd maxim of endeavouring to console extreme sorrow by leading it from its object; grief is a noble imperious passion, that ought not to be thwarted, but to be flattered and indulged: on these principles, instead of avoiding the name of Peverell, I have frequently introduced it; and as we were within a few miles of Dover, in speaking of the personal attractions of Laura, I extolled

I extolled in the warmest terms that rare portion of masculine grace and comeliness which that gallant young man was universally allowed to possess. I thought I saw in the features of Giuliana that her impassioned heart swelled with a delightful, though melancholy pride, in hearing this honest praise of its idol ; and in a moment she exclaimed,

“ Discolorato hai morte il piu vel voko
Che mai si vide ; e i piu begli occhi spenti
Spirto piu acceso di virtuti ardenti
Del piu leggiadro, e piu vel nodo hai sciolto.
In un momento ogni mio ven mi hai tolto.”

[Oh Death, thou hast discoloured the most beautiful countenance, and extinguished the brightest eyes ! thou hast loosed from the most graceful of mortal bonds a spirit most animated by every ardent virtue. In a moment thou hast robbed me of all my treasure.]

Would to heaven I were a poet, that I might give you a juster idea of these enchanting numbers ! yet, even then, I could not convey to you the inimitable gesture and heart-searching tone of Giuliana ; these were so exquisitely pathetic on this occasion, that I was never half so much affected by the deepest tragedy as by her recitation of these few verses. My tears, I believe, would have continued flowing till we entered Dover, had not my affection been called to a little auditor who felt the pathos of this passage still more intensely than I did : you will immediately see this could be no other than the poor faithful

faithful Giannina, whom you seated on the stool at our feet. I soon perceived her little rosy face was grown as pale as death itself; and I verily believe the girl would have fainted, or fallen into convulsions, if I had not jumped from the chaise, and carried her in my arms for a few paces in the cool air. Giuliana, who is, you know, all tenderness to this little orphan, soon completed her recovery, by the sweetness of her maternal solicitude for the affectionate sufferer. But let me return to Petrarch: As we are such idolaters of the poet, we have agreed to visit Vaucluse on our journey, and I shall not write to you again till we have paid our devotions there. I conjure you and Lucy to sit down and begin learning Italian together; you know not what delight you have lost, by not being able to converse with our lovely friend in her own sweet language! Thank Heaven, my Cornelia both speaks and sings it. My Cornelia, do I say? alas! if she is destined not to be so! Do you know, that Giuliana, who has, I fancy, received some hints from Lucy, begins to preach to me, like an angel as she is, on my impetuous character, and the danger of the passions! I am impetuous, I confess, yet not unreasonable in my wishes. Oh Heaven! let me be but as ardently beloved by Cornelia as Peverell still is by Giuliana, and I will ask no more! Adieu. My engaging fellow-traveller intreated me to say every thing that is kind for her. While I have been writing, she and Giannina have been trying to sleep off the unpleasant effects of their

sea-sickness. They are now much restored. Once more adieu; and let me repeat my request, and consign you to your Italian Grammar, that you may read the future letters of *Giuliana* with full pleasure. She will write to you, she says, as long as she exists; and if you do not acquire her language, you may oblige her perhaps, hereafter, to have her thoughts and words mangled by some translator still worse than your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XIII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Lyon.

AS I knew I should find opportunities of sending our kind remembrances to you by your intimate friend, and most punctual correspondent, at Paris, I intended not to write to you again till we had reached Avignon, and visited *Vaucluse*, the only object in our road that I thought likely to interest the curiosity, and afford any thing like amusement, to my lovely grief-devoted companion. But we have unexpectedly met with some adventures in our way, that not only drove *Petrarch* and *Vaucluse* from her mind, but almost made her forget even *Pèverell*

rell himself. In a word, my dear Edmund (but do not be alarmed, for the danger is all over), I have been at the point of death. I had reason indeed to call Giuliana an angel; for I must have expired, had not this divine creature watched over me with an attention as indefatigable and incessant as ever was paid by a fond mother to her sick infant. We have now been eleven days in this commodious and charitable city: I ought, I am sure, to bestow upon it that honourable epithet, as I have received from its generous inhabitants, to whom even my name was unknown, various presents of such articles as they supposed might be of use and comfort to a stranger, whom sickness had overtaken on his travels. My disorder, I confess, has been the natural effect of my own imprudence; for at Moulins I did a very foolish thing: unknown to Giuliana, and trusting too much to a strong constitution, I contracted a villainous cold and fever, by passing the whole night in the open air, to gratify a nonsensical whim that I will explain to you hereafter. By slighting my complaint at first, I made it miserably serious. On my arrival here, I was obliged to keep my bed; and during the first seven days Giuliana and her good little silent shadow Giannina were constantly in my chamber day and night. They have now (God bless them!) restored me to such a degree that we are to set forward again to-morrow, and in a mode of travelling that, instead of wearying me with the fatigue of a journey, will rather restore me by the most easy, pleasant, and refreshing exercise; for we are to descend the

Rhône

Rhone in a large batteau, in which there is a cabbin ; it will take our carriage on board, and we are to stop in this agreeable voyage for the purposes of dining and sleeping at the different towns that embellish the banks of the river : thus, they tell us, we shall be smoothly and gaily waisted to Avignon ; and in truth, though my fever is entirely gone, I am not yet fit for any sort of rapid or rough motion. Here is my best physician, nurse, and governess, Giuliana, looking at her submissive and grateful patient with her angelic black eyes, and commanding me to resign my pen ; first, because my head is not very fit to guide it any longer ; and secondly, because she is determined she says to add herself an English postscript to this epistle. She shall not, however, take the paper from me till I have told you, that instead of lamenting, I really bless my illness ; because it has in its termination done more essential service to the wounded spirit of my lovely friend, than my broken health could possibly have rendered her. My recovery seems indeed to have given her new existence. O Benevolence ! I was not before insensible to thy beauty or thy power ; but I knew not till now thy healing efficacy over a heart, however bruised and torn, that is still able to feel thee in all thy purest excess ! Giuliana, in saving, and securing to me, that life which was on the point of its departure from this suffering frame, has in great measure dispelled the oppressive cloud which hung so heavy on her celestial mind. Though it is a cordial to me to praise her to you as I ought, she will not allow
me

me to scribble a syllable more. So farewell. Be not at all alarmed for me; and depend on my writing again very soon.

P. S. by GIULIANA

I must invite you to rejoice with me, dearest friends; for I did not think my poor heart could ever feel again upon earth a joy of so much sincerity and spirit like what I feel in the safety of this generous soul, my kind conductor, who has been sick indeed. By the assistance of the good God, I have made him to live, when I thought he must die! Now, praised be Heaven, all the danger is over! These are joyful English words from the pen of your Giuliana. Praying a most happy course to your honourable lives, I kiss your dear hands, my beloved father Edmund and sister Lucy. *Adieu.*

LETTER XIV.

FROM MISS AUDLEY TO MRS. AUDLEY.

[with the preceding inclosed.]

THANK you, my dear Harriot, for the very amusing peep you have given me into the bosom of our Cornelia. You have, in a most

most lively manner, presented her whole heart to my eyes; and methinks such a view of a heart in love is like viewing a little lump of cheese through a microscope. I see all the poor Cornelia's doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, caprices, arguments, surmises, phantasies, &c. &c. &c. all huddled and hurried together in perpetual rotation, like a legion of mites, and forming as it were the very substance of her heart. I fancy all her honest and delicate hypocrisy, though it deceives herself, will never lead you to doubt on the real state of her affection: but if you wish to put the point to still farther proof, I shall enable you to do so, for I enclose what I think an infallible touchstone for that purpose. You have only to read to her the letter from Seymour, which you will find in this; taking care however to omit a parenthesis of comfort just before you come to the words "I have been at the point of death." If she is in truth so deeply in love with the engaging creature as we have reason to conjecture, you will see her turn as pale as I did in a moment you well remember, when you and I were first informed that a certain plausible deceiver, who had just boasted to us of his prosperous voyage, was utterly undone. I most heartily hope that the issue of your Cornelia's love may be more happy than mine—it may be more happy, and yet not so tranquil: for my own part, I now rest on the same maxim of a reasonable poet,

"Aim not at joy, but rest content with ease."

Let

Let me, however, in disclaiming joy, declare, that I mean only the joys of love : for as to those of friendship, which I am persuaded are infinitely the more valuable, few mortals possess them in more abundance, and none can feel them in a higher degree than I do ; particularly when I reflect, my dear Harriot, on all your kindness towards me ; and assure you, with a love “ passing the Love of MAN,” that I am

Your affectionate, &c,

P. S. Edmund is well, but not a little anxious concerning the health of his friend. For my part, I am inclined to think this illness is providential, and only destined to prevent his being licentiously enamoured of his lovely companion ; of which I confess I had terrible apprehensions. What a charming creature she is ! I was infinitely more affected by her little postscript of odd English, than by all Seymour's account of his malady. Farewell. Pray tell me very soon how my touchstone operates on the tender widow. Methinks I am like an old chemist, who, having burnt his fingers, impaired his health, and then destroyed all his books in dudgeon, takes a sort of half-malicious and half-goodnatured pleasure in observing a chemical novice, who carelessly sports with the most subtle corrosive, before he is perfectly and painfully apprized of its extreme power.

I intended you a larger packet ; but as the contents of this are very interesting, and I have

an opportunity of dispatching them immediately by a private conveyance, I seize it with great eagerness; so once more farewell.

LETTER XV.

Mrs. AUDLEY.

[in answer to the preceding.]

YOU are a skilful chemist indeed, my dear Lucy—an absolute conjuror; but pray send us no more of your corrosive touchstones, my dear; or when you do, be so kind as to give me, at the same time, a lesson of caution on the use of them.—Turn pale indeed! do you call this turning pale, to be half frightened out of sense and existence? Ah, poor Cornelia! verily thou art infected. But let me recover from my sympathy in her panic, and make a full confession to you, my dear full sister, in this little piece of inquisitorial iniquity, how very wickedly I managed it. Your packet travelling by a private hand, found me alone in the morning. Cornelia had left me, to write letters in her own room. Having perused both yours and Seymour's, I was seized with a passionate desire to make the most of your touchstone. I believe, my dear, all women have
a little

a little white malice in their minds on such occasions. I instantly sealed the packet again very neatly, and told my own maid to bring it to me as just arrived, when she found that Cornelia and I were sat down as usual to work together in the favourite little dressing-room. This critical time soon arrived; and while we were discoursing on the travellers, a very frequent topic with us, your kind packet was put again into my hand. Before I broke the seal, I observed no small degree of solicitude in the countenance of my companion. I thought her eyes sparkled with pleasure on the sight of Seymour's hand. She entreated me to read his letter aloud. I obeyed your direction; and left out the parenthesis that speaks of his recovery: and in slowly pronouncing the words "*at the point of death*," I fixed a searching eye on the features of my friend; describe them to you I cannot—no language can do justice to their expression; I must therefore content myself with telling you my own varied sensations of the moment. When I caught the first glimpse of her face, as I had my own treacherous trick very strongly in my head, I was on the point of laughing at the appearance of its success; but the pallid hue of affectionate terror, and I may say agony, growing every instant more alarming in the countenance of Cornelia, who sat before me with the open but speechless lips of anxiety and expectation, my heart smote me, and rendered me unable to execute all the cruel design that I had formed against her; which was, to let her remain for some hours in an absolute persuasion

of

of Seymour's being still in great danger : this barbarity I could not support ; I read the reviving parenthesis ; but without an avowal that I ought to have read it before. She was a little comforted : but her sufferings were still severe enough to excite my compassion : she perceived that I pitied her, and it both softened and opened her heart towards me ; for, on my saying, with an half-smile, " Ah, my dear Cornelia, can you still say, and think, that you do not love Seymour ?" she burst into a flood of tears, and hiding her lovely face in my bosom, she said, in a heart-piercing murmur, " I do, my dearest friend, I do love him in my soul : but it is a folly and a crime, my dear Harriot, that you must not encourage, but help me to cure."

You, my dear Lucy, who know what a friend I am to all honest love, will readily guess the part I now took in our conversation. I said every thing that the most friendly sympathy could suggest, to soothe and to fortify her over-scrupulous and trembling heart. I said what I really think, that her affection, instead of being either foolish or criminal, is the fair offspring, not only of nature, but of propriety and justice. The very delicate and respectful manner in which Seymour had sought her esteem, during the life of the poor old querulous invalid, whom it was impossible for her to love ; the trembling awe, and the fond anxiety, with which he ventured to force himself into her presence, in this house ; and all his behaviour here ; furnished me with weighty arguments in his favour ; and I pleaded his cause, I believe, with

with all the warmth of a sister ; for I almost feel that I love him with a sisterly affection myself. The poor fellow seemed to derive so much comfort from my little civility to him in his short visit here, when my good man and Cornelia were both inclined to look rather blank upon him, that he convinced me of the truth and force of his passion, by the excess of his timidity and embarrassment ; for in the first hour or two he seemed as it were to cling to me, to give him courage, as a child does, in first entering a dark room with its nurse. As the rogue does not want either grace or decent confidence in his general manners, his extreme sensibility on this occasion inclined me very much to befriend him. I did so when he was here ; I have now done so in his absence ; and if it should really prove a misfortune to Cornelia to love him, as the dear weeping trembler told me it certainly must, Heaven forgive me for the sin I have incurred in fanning the flame of her bosom ! Not that I think Seymour much indebted to the abilities or the zeal of his advocate, for the sway he has gained over this little submissive, though murmuring heart, we are talking of. I said indeed a good deal in his praise : but what of that ? had not the most eloquent of all eulogists spoke before me ?—had not Love informed her, that in age, in figure, in fortune, and in mutual regard, Seymour and Cornelia are a couple uncommonly well-paired : they are, indeed, so perfectly matched in these essential points, that it is hardly possible to see them together without wishing them united.—Aye, but my sweet Harriot,

Harriot, says the trembling conscientious Cornelia, think of that tremendous article, Religion! Remember the dying advice of my kind and provident Sedley! No, let me die by a malady more painful and more lingering than his, rather than act in opposition to so just, so benevolent, a counsellor." My dear Cornelia, I admire your virtuous spirit—I am charmed with your resolution; but do not disquiet your gentle heart with these imaginary terrors; there may be no such obstacle as you suppose in your way to happiness.—“Nay, my good Harriot, why would you wish to flatter and delude me? Did not you yourself, the other day, in speaking of Seymour, allude to the universal opinion of his being an Infidel? You spoke indeed in jest—a barbarous jest—but you did not know how deeply you wounded this very foolish heart. Now I have laid open to you all its aching fibres, pray, my dear Harriot, drop a little oil upon them; and do not, I conjure you, do not administer to me any of those dangerous medicines, which, under the pretence of healing a wound, only inflame and render it incurable.—Indeed I must not think of Seymour—no, I never will think of him! I hope he will remain in Italy—I wish he may fall in love with Giuliana—’Tis very likely.” Here a deep sigh; which made me exclaim, “Oh, you abominable lovely hypocrite! you have not any such wish in your heart; and if you ever forced yourself to feel it for a moment, and heard of its being accomplished, it would still make you half-frantic. Come, come, my dear Cornelia, there is really

no occasion for any of these desperate insupportable wishes ; wish him a good godly husband to yourself, and try to make him so. Who, my dear, could mould the rough arrogant mind of man better than such a gentle angel as yourself, when inspired by the best motives, both of heaven and earth, true piety and chaste affection ? Do we not read in history, that most of the Gothic sovereigns in Europe were converted to Christianity by their wives ? After all, my dear, though we have allowed ourselves to talk freely of Seymour's wanting devotion ; yet surely he is not more deficient in that point than the general herd of young men who have been bred to his rank and fortune : they are all so engrossed by pleasure or ambition, that few can find time either to think or to hear of God. Indeed I believe the generality of men in all stations are little acquainted with devotional ideas, till towards the middle, or rather the latter stage of their life ; when, being settled in a domestic circle, and seeing a new generation rise to succeed in their departments, they find it high time to reflect on a better world.

You know, my dear Cornelia, it was my singular good fortune to fall into the arms of a man whose amiable mind imbibed very early a deep sense of religion ; but, as he has told me himself, he was indebted for this blessing to some remarkable incidents that happened to him in his youth, much more than to any instruction. Religious as he is, no man can be more indulgent to those who differ from himself, though his sense of the beneficial influence which religion

gion has had, and still has on his own happiness, makes him wish most cordially to see it more prevalent: his sentiments and discourse on the levity of others are never violent or intrusive. I know he most sincerely admires all the generous and all the agreeable qualities in Seymour; and I will venture to say, that no event in the world would give him more pleasure than one which he thinks by no means improbable, and which I confess myself inclined to reckon in the class of certainties: I mean, the event of our seeing the engaging Seymour every thing we can wish him; or, to use the devout and gallant language of chivalry, most perfect in his homage, both to God and his fair one."

'Twas thus, my dear Lucy, that I ran on, in my affectionate harangue to comfort and enliven the dear troubled Cornelia. I had the satisfaction of seeing her sweet countenance more and more serene, as I proceeded, till at last her face growing bright as the face of an angel, she pressed my hand, and exclaimed, in a transport from her favourite tragedy of Zara:

"Were he but Christian, what could man be more!"

She uttered this line with such an air of fond and devout passion, and as she spoke the possibility, or rather the hope, of being holily united to the only man she has ever loved, gave such a rich and tender glow to her lovely features, that I never saw any woman look so gloriously beautiful, to use a strong expression of our admired Lady Wortley, as my dear comforted Cornelia looked in that moment. I believe I remained gazing at her,

her, in mute delight, for a minute, as the pleasant traveller I have just mentioned gazed on the fair Fatima at Adrianople : though the Turkish lady, I grant, was a more dazzling figure, from the splendid novelty of her dress, I am persuaded she was not equal in beauty to my incomparable friend ; for, in the first place, I can never think that black eyes can equal the delicious tenderness of blue ; secondly, the monotony of Turkish love can hardly permit the face of a sultana to express that sweet and rich combination of intelligence, sentiment, and passion, which gave such inexpressible charms to the countenance of Cornelia at the instant I am talking of. But this little digression on beauty, of which you know I am a great idolater, has detained me too much : I must hasten to tell you, that we remained not long on those transporting heights to which our spirits were suddenly carried. Cornelia soon fell from the pinnacle of hope, and I gently descended from that of admiration. Our conference took a more sober turn, and closed with a discreet resolution, not to enter into any warm arguments, either for or against the object of our debate ; but to leave things as they now are to those two great settlers of human doubts and perplexities, time and chance. In the mean time you will readily believe, that our eagerness to be favoured with all the dispatches you receive from the travellers, is not in a way to be diminished. Exclusive, indeed, of the interest Cornelia takes in his welfare, I am heartily concerned for Seymour's illness, both on his own account, and that of his interesting charge. Heaven send us
an

an early and good account of them! As to your remark, my dear Lucy, concerning the chaste providential tendency of Seymour's illness, I most heartily hope that you may be in the right; but I confess it strikes me in the opposite point of view, though I would not tell Cornelia so for the world; and perhaps it is merely because I remember a whimsical speech, made by a curious old gentleman, who used to visit my father very often, and delighted to make us girls laugh by the oddity of his remarks upon love and matrimony, his never-failing subjects of discourse. This said old gentleman once gave the following caution to my mother: "Madam," said he, with an arch and humorous solemnity of face, "permit me to advise you never to employ a young woman to attend a sick man, unless you wish to make a match between them; for I have always observed in these cases, that the first use which a convalescent makes of his reviving strength is, a grateful tender of it to his nurse; and the good girl is so delighted to see a sick man growing well again, that she has no heart to contradict him."

There's a short story for you, as an epilogue to the long one. Heaven grant it may make you smile, without being any bad omen for Cornelia! Mercy on us! if any such things should happen, as the recollection of this nonsensical old proser has put into my head: Deuce take him! for starting up in my memory; but not a word more, for here comes Cornelia, with two maps in her hand, to shew me all the route of the travellers. Ah, poor stricken deer! Well I must positively

positively close with all our love to you both. Dear girl, send us some good news the first moment that you have it in your power: and remember, that my packets to you are as voluminous as an old counsellor's opinion; so pray initiate the lawyers on your part, and be not sparing in reply. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

From my Batteau on the Rhone.

ALIVE! alive, my dear Edmund! Behold me floating down the Rhone, by the side of the lovely and now smiling Giuliana. Do not therefore let your kind apprehension suggest to you, that I may be crossing the Styx with old Charon: my present voyage is a thousand times better; for I was never more disposed in my life to relish the charms of this world. Every thing I see is beautiful, every thing I taste is delicious. If this is the usual effect of a recovery from sickness, I would willingly be sick once a-year. There is one thing, however, that puzzles me to account for: as you are a profound speculator, and as you love to ruminate on the variety and oddity of human sensations, I propose to your

sage worship the following query for your solution: Why was I a good and faithful Platonist a month ago, when I was in the full vigour of health? and why, at this season, when I am little more than half restored from a state of debility, why do I feel a desperate inclination to the philosophy of Epicurus? What strange creatures we are! It seems to me as if all our wit and stupidity, our wisdom and folly, our virtues and vices, depended on a few drops, more or less, of the red, white, and yellow fluids, that are perpetually changing in these tragi-comical machines that we call human bodies. I am this moment a striking illustration of my theory. I seized a pen, all gaiety, to write you at least the beginning of a gay epistle on board. The motion of the boat as I write has moved my bile, made me half squeamish; and behold my gaiety turned to a dull dissertation on the mechanism of man, of which, like many who have attempted to explain it, I know nothing. But this I know, that when the manly machine is out of tune, nothing can put it so soon into harmony as placing it within the influence of an enchanting female; so allow me to throw down the pen, and take a few turns on the short deck of our vessel with my sweet messmate Giuliana. I will finish this as soon as we land at the village where we mean to dine.

I am now on shore; but tossed at this moment in one of the most disquieting half-tempests of heart and mind that I ever experienced. Alas! my dear Edmund, I have played the fool most abominably. I reproach myself, and, what is worse, I feel incessantly that I still more deserve
your

your reproaches. But that you may not, from these imperfect intimations, suppose my offences more flagrant than they have been, I will give you a very full and frank history of the extreme folly by which I have poisoned the pure delight that, in spite of sickness itself, I had enjoyed, till this luckless day, in the faithful discharge of my trust.

After a most pleasant and short day's voyage, the kind considerate Giuliana, thinking me more an invalid than I am, and desirous that I should avoid the evening air on the river, contrived for us to take a late dinner at a delightful village, where we are also to pass the night. Our hotel is a new and elegant little structure built after an English model with bow windows, commanding one of the most enchanting prospects that the eye can behold. Our landlady had been particularly recommended to Giuliana at Lyons, and not without reason, for she seems to possess in very rare and happy proportions the vivacity of France, and the neatness of Holland. In high delight with this singular and most agreeable *auberge*, I and my lovely companion, after a chearful dinner in one of its upper apartments, were leaning together on the open bow-window that commands this delicious country, when chance, or the devil, call it which you will, presented a sight to me that in an instant set fire to all the reviving wanton blood in my veins; yet it was by no means a sight of licentious pleasure, but one that rather favoured of primeval innocence and the golden age. Our window commanded a very pretty cottage, with

a little vineyard and flower-garden. The happy master of this diminutive kingdom is, it seems, a Scotch Catholic, who, after passing a few years in the French service, settled here with a very beautiful fair-one of this country. Having a passion for gardening, and being still in the prime of life, he draws a most healthy and delightful subsistence from wine, fruit, and flowers, the produce of his little domain. The business of the vintage is all past for this year; but it seems this honest man has a sensible good-natured custom of rewarding his handsome wife, and sweet children, for their labours in that busy season, by saving for them, as a treat after their toil, a little portion of his most exquisite fruit. We happened to behold him in the instant of collecting and distributing this reserved treasure. Figure to yourself, my dear Edmund, a fine tall military florid fellow, stretching out his manly frame at the top of a ladder, to reach some bunches of magnificent grapes, at the lofty extremities of a broken rock, part of which he had fashioned into a garden-wall. Observe towards the feet of the ladder a little golden-headed boy, like a cherubim, who has crept up four or five steps, and is holding up the hollow of his hat; while his mother, a woman as comely, as luxuriant in beauty as Pomona herself, holds one side of the ladder, while two beautiful little girls (both older than the boy) seem to delight themselves in thinking that they support the other. Behold the happy father descending with a neat open basket, well filled, in his hand. His children form a little circle around him; each receives

ceives a luxuriant bunch of grapes ; each smiles with content and transport at the allotted share. Thus far all is well : but the honest man having kissed each of his children, in distributing his presents, upon delivering the residue of the fruit and the basket to their smiling mother, throws his left arm around her, and gives her so hearty a kiss, a kiss so marvellously expressive of conjugal happiness, that an old hermit in seeing it must have longed for a wife. No words can tell you the kind of electric fire that it seemed to communicate to all my fibres. Giuliana moved from the window, under the pretence of helping herself to a glass of water. I could not forbear following her ; and I exclaimed, “ What a couple of simpletons are you and I, my dear Giuliana ! You are solicitous to save the soul of a father who may not perhaps thank you for your intention ; and I to gain the heart of a widow, who has, perhaps, already bestowed it on a more fortunate suitor. How much wiser would it be in both of us to settle together in this delicious country, and act the sweet scene that we have just beheld in a vineyard of our own ! ” In uttering the last word, I imprinted an hasty kiss on her lips. I had never made the slightest advance towards touching them before, and her extreme surprize did not allow her either time or presence of mind sufficient to shrink from my caress : but if you wish to know how she looked on the occasion, imagine to yourself, my dear Edmund, an Attic priestess, in the moment of seeing an altar which she had guarded with the devoutest fidelity prophaned by a barbarian. Indignant displeasure

sure lightened from her eyes; her whole countenance expressed the rebuke of an offended angel; and I believe she was on the point of uttering some words of great severity, but she checked herself, and remained silent a few moments. I fancy my appearance affected her; it must have been very singular; for the flame of wanton desire, which had, I confess, a momentary existence in my bosom, had sunk in the smouldering vapour of vexation and remorse. The agitation of these opposite feelings had given such a tremulous weakness to my unbraced nerves, that I believe Giuliana soon beheld me rather as an object of pity than of terror. I absolutely had not power to speak; and, after a short pause, Giuliana said with a plaintive gentleness of voice and manner, a thousand times more affecting to me than any vehement acrimonious reproof could have been, "This is very wrong and very unexpected in my generous guide! Do not, Seymour, do not so cruelly destroy the sincere satisfaction I felt, in being the instrument, under God, of preserving your life!" Closing this tender reprimand with a look still more expressive of her own wounded feelings, she left the room, and I felt as if I had heard my good genius say, "You are become unworthy of my care, and I abandon you to a legion of infernal tormentors." My heart indeed was full of such visitants: I traversed the room in vain to shake them off, my attempts were equally fruitless, whether I tried to reason, or to laugh myself out of my bitter vexation. Pho! nonsense! said Pride, to comfort me. After all, what is your
mighty

mighty crime ? barely touching the lip of a very beautiful woman, with whom you were alone. Aye, but, says Conscience, you know there are certain situations in which a simple kiss may seem an outrage, as cruel as absolute violation : it is in these tender points where a delicate heart and mind are concerned,

“ That nothing is but thinking makes it so.”

Whatever self-battery can suggest in my defence, the troubled look of Giuliana, imprinted on my heart, refutes every syllable of my delusive advocate. I find no relief but in the most perfect repentance. When I had brought my mind into a tolerable calm, by penitent resolutions of making all the atonement in my power for having so ungratefully offended my divine companion, I sat down to give you this history. I am now jaded with writing. Giuliana is not returned to me ; I feel, like a wretch as I am, that I hardly deserve to see her more ; yet I must enquire where she is.—Death and distraction ! I may not see her for these two hours ; she is gone, with Giannina and the hostess, Heaven knows whither. I deserve it all, but her absence is more torturing to me than either the looks or language of her displeasure. Some demon has surely had the conduct of this whole day : it was from a perverse incident of his contrivance that Giannina happened to have left us alone after dinner ; for I have constantly made a point of treating the girl more as a relation than a servant to Giuliana, and of course we have had her perpetually in our presence till this unfortunate afternoon.

I am

I am this instant interrupted by a message from an obliging English traveller, who is just setting off for Lyons, and has kindly offered to take charge of any little packet that I may wish to dispatch. I am much more inclined to commit this epistle to the flames, than to any conveyance whatever; yet, in recollecting that my last may have filled your affectionate heart with painful apprehensions for my life, I think it best to send you the speediest account I can of my reviving health, though I shew you at the same time that I hardly deserve to live. Indeed I shall hardly desire a longer existence than may suffice for me to reconcile Giuliana and her father; for I feel that I have forfeited all claims, if I ever had any, to the love of that irreproachable angelic creature, whose very name my lips are now become unworthy to pronounce, Cornelia. How should I presume to call her *my Cornelia*, as I fondly used to do, when I reflect that *she* never faltered in the execution of long, irksome, and painful duties, for which she was often repaid, they say, by querulous ingratitude; and that *I* (Heavens! what a contrast!) that I have villainously failed in one delicate and honourable duty, though I felt the faithful discharge of it not only free from pain, but absolute delight. Oh! Edmund, the fever that has ceased to prey on my frame, and that I thought so grievous, was ease and pleasure, compared to this new kind of fever that I feel at this moment in my mind. I am sick with the worst of all sickness, I am sick of myself. As I have always found you a most indulgent and soothing father-confessor in my most impetuous and extravagant

vagant follies, let me conjure you to be so now ; pray let me find, on my arrival at Genoa, such a letter from as may tend to tranquillize my perturbed spirit, and make me less odious to myself, by shewing me that you still retain some esteem for your most sincere and affectionate, &c. P. S. Giuliana is not yet returned ; and I cannot detain this another instant. Adieu.

LETTER XVII.

FROM MISS AUDLEY TO MRS. AUDLEY.

TAKE back to yourself, my dear Harriot, the fine title you bestowed on me. 'Tis you who are the real conjurer ; you are the true prophets. O man ! man ! inconstant, abominable man ! in sober truth now I could almost weep to think that, in reply to your most delightful history of Cornelia, I have a sorry anecdote to tell you of her too agreeable infidel, who seems to prove himself as unorthodox in the nice points of love and honour, as he is supposed to be in the essential article of Religion. Alas ! how would the tremulous heart of our poor Cornelia palpitate, if she knew what I have learnt this morning ! that the wicked rogue has been wantonly kissing his lovely afflicted fellow-travel-

ler. O Heavens! I hear you exclaim; but hush, hush, my dear Harriot; drop not a word, I conjure you, that may suggest such a tormenting idea to the tender widow. In truth, all this terrific affair was nothing but the idle frolic of a moment; and the rogue has made himself such a frank confession, and expressed so much sincere contrition for his offence, that we ought perhaps to be rather quieted than alarmed by the incident. Let us act therefore as true Charity does with greater sinners, and conclude that his past wickedness will only furnish him with a surer foundation for his future virtue. You and I, my dear Harriot, may rest perhaps on this conclusion; but it would not do for the disquieted Cornelia. I know, by woeful experience, that ideas which act as an opiate on the moderate apprehensions of Friendship, may produce nothing but an increase of irritation on the wild and feverish terrors of Love. Pray observe what a wondrous philosopher I grow, in living so much with our dear speculative Edmund. Indeed, he kindly lets me into many mysteries, to which I should be otherwise an utter stranger; and the knowledge of them has no little influence in securing that degree of content which I have happily recovered. There was a time, you may remember, when I wished to be a young man, of a good figure, and an independent fortune; supposing, as I believe many misses suppose, that such a character sports in the world at his pleasure, as in a perfect paradise. I have now very different ideas of this being, once so envied; an opulent young man, of strong passions, acute sensibility,

sensibility, and with no well-settled principles, such in short as they most of them are, such a character, I say, now strikes me as resembling the dancers that I have read of in some barbarous nation, who twist, torture, and wound themselves a thousand horrible ways, under the name of gaiety and diversion: it is true, indeed, as Rowe, has sweetly told us,

“ That man, the lawless libertine, may rove
Free and unquestion'd thro' the wilds of love.”

But what does he generally find in these roving, so delightful to a young and credulous fancy? what are his adventures in this alluring wild? Why, truly, at one thicket he encounters a tigress; in another he is stung by an adder; or, if he is one of the lucky mortals who meet with a milder destiny in this said variegated wild, still, in stooping to gather a primrose, it is ten to one but he pricks his fingers against an hedgehog. But what a simple chattering monkey am I myself, in thus running into a fantastic dissertation on libertines, when I only meant to assure you, in a few simple words, that you and your lovely friend may be perfectly easy concerning the health of our interesting travellers! I wish of all things to inclose to you Seymour's letter to Edmund; but the rigid philosopher says, No: adding with a kind of severity, “ If Cornelia should accidentally catch a sight of the hand, and petition for a perusal of the letter, the sympathetic Harriot has not fortitude enough to refuse; nor could she, indeed, with any very good grace.” You must allow there is some reason, as
well

well as good-nature, in this argument; so if your curiosity, my dear Harriot, teizes you a little on this point, as I fear it will, I can only say, as Hamlet does to his dear Horatio,

“ O’ermaster it as you may.”

I ought, perhaps, to proceed like Hamlet; and bind you, by a solemn form of adjuration: so come, my dear, prepare yourself to take the oath I require; swear to me upon your fan (which is a lady’s sword); swear, I say,

“ Not to make known what you have heard to night;
Nor, by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase;
Nor, by ambiguous giving out, denote,
That you know aught from me.”

I would not, for the world, be accidentally the instrument to wound your Cornelia; I most cordially wish her happy, though I fear she has but little chance of being so: I know how dangerous it is to love a man for whom our esteem cannot keep pace with our affection. But away with these gloomy presages: Heaven bless her to the utmost of her fond expectation, and preserve me as I am,

“ In maiden meditation fancy-free !”

A curious prayer this on my part, when I am just fallying forth to take captive the noble General who has lately settled in our neighbourhood! We are to dine with him to-day; I dressed very early on purpose (not to captivate him, my dear, but) to scribble to you, without the dread of scribbling, as you know I have sometimes done,
without

without thinking of my dress till the very moment the carriage was ordered. Among my late philosophical observations I have observed, there is nothing which the lordly creature man dislikes more than to be made to wait for a woman who has no means of repaying him for her delay.

Well, here is the dear lordly Edmund himself just come into my room, to tell me the chariot is at the door; and let me add, there is a new horse to it, which is so like a man, that he cannot wait with patience, and is at this instant pawing up the new-laid gravel under his feet. Horse and man, be as impatient as ye please, I cannot lay down my pen till I have told my dear Harriot the saucy speech Edmund has just made to me; especially as he delivered it as a kind of maxim for the grand purpose of teaching a spinster how to chuse a husband: "Come, Lucy, said my dear dictator, come, and set your cap at the General: the love of a young man is like a dram; if it does not intoxicate, it inflames and undermines the health; but the love of a man in middle life is like wine; it does not agitate the animal spirits too furiously, but only acts as an excellent stomachick." So you see, my dear Harriot, if I take the General, it is nothing more than taking a glass of port by the advice of my physician. But, as you know I hate to follow prescriptions, I trust you will see me like a wise invalid, recover all my natural gaiety, by prudently and resolutely abstaining from all cordials whatever. From this scrawl I think you may conclude that I am growing as great a rattle as I used to be.—Mercy, the horse has begun to rear!

rear ! and if I stay another moment, the philosophic Edmund will begin to swear ; so God bless you ! and believe me ever,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

THE offended angel has forgiven me. But I am not yet reconciled to myself. My transgression, indeed, admits of palliation—and it might have been infinitely greater. But what a sorry apology is this, my dear Edmund ! Was not Adam, as they tell us, banished from Paradise for tasting the tree of knowledge ; though he touched not the tree of life ? I feel like Adam ; I feel exiled from a mental Paradise, which I have basely forfeited, and can hope to enter no more : I may indeed describe the divine Giuliana as the Adam of Milton describes Heaven after his offence,

“ I saw her placable and mild.”

And I may also say of myself, that I have

“ many days
Give me of grace, wherein I may repent,
And one bad act with many deeds well done
May cover.”

But

But I feel that these days of mine, like those of poor Adam after his fall, must be passed in a state very different from my forfeited felicity. Though Giuliana, who has seen me not only penitent, but half-ill again with chagrin and vexation, has treated me with great indulgence and kindness; yet I too plainly perceive it is not in her own power to recall those pure, those tender, those deliciously flattering sensations of sisterly love towards me, which my folly has dispelled. I have heard those who drink more freely than we do, my dear Edmond, declare, that there is a certain pitch of pleasure as you approach towards intoxication, which gives you an idea of celestial delight. I cannot say I have felt this to the exquisite degree they describe in any convivial festivity; but I maintain there is something which answers their description in a certain period of perfect friendship, with a modest, beautiful, afflicted woman. In the chaste familiarity and entire confidence of Giuliana, there was an inexpressible charm, which approached nearer to angelic bliss than all the raptures of triumphant love; like a brutal idiot as I was, I have destroyed this charm for ever; since, as I have told you already, it is not in the power of the lovely forgiving angel herself to restore it. But I will cease to weary you with this fruitless lamentation, and tell you the progress of our journey.

After a most tranquil voyage, in which the three gentlest elements, water, earth, and air, seemed to smile upon us as if they vied with each other in a wish to please us, we arrived last night at Avignon. Our progress down the Rhone, which

which is by no means so rapid as I expected to find it, would have proved indeed a perfect jaunt of pleasure, if our minds had been in harmony with the scene around us; but this was far from being the case: poor Giuliana was frequently absorbed in melancholy reveries; and as to myself, being neither sick nor well, nor happy nor wretched, my affections and my imagination, instead of doing what they ought to have done, instead of contributing to the proper and salutary exercise of each other, seemed to have sunk into a stupid and detestable lethargy together. I did not look indeed on this smiling face of nature with such malignant eyes as the devil cast upon Eden, for I had not vivacity enough in my frame to feel the passion of envy; but I stared with heavy, sour, and most uncomfortable apathy, upon a series of animated scenes, from which I had expected to catch a tender gaiety of heart, and sprightliness of fancy. As we drew near Avignon, I could not help observing to Giuliana, that we had both discovered somewhat of ungrateful insensibility to the extreme fineness of our weather, and prosperity of our voyage. She answered by a happy quotation of these charming words from Metastasio (which I hope you and your fair fellow student Lucy are by this time able to construe),

"Secondo in guerra, o in pace
Trovano il nostro cor
Cambiano di color
Tutti gli oggetti,"

[All

[All objects change their colour, in proportion as they find war or peace in our hearts."]

This quotation applicable to both. I have already given you too long an account of my own feelings, the poor rickety children of Indisposition and Folly; two miserable parents! Those of *Giuliana* had a nobler pedigree; and deserve a more ample history.

The great satisfaction, I may say the transient delight, which her feeling spirit received from my recovery, was soon over-cast by many cloudy thoughts. She has endured much pain, not indeed from the recurring force of her former affliction; nor from that disquieting incident of the kiss, which my misty imagination has magnified, perhaps, to a very foolish degree, in all that I have said to you upon it.—The divine *Giuliana*, has adopted a new and much deeper source of disquietude. Her benevolent and tender mind will interest itself in a point that I have weakly suffered to become the object of her thoughts, though I did not mean that it should ever fall within her knowledge, or even within her suspicion. This sounds a little like the language of an Irishman; but a few words will make the bull, if it is one, intelligible.

You must know then, that during my fever at Lyons I had two days of delirium; in which they tell me I made some very curious remarks concerning the immaculate conception, and diverse articles in the birth, parentage, and education, of a certain mysterious Personage, whom I should rather have supposed myself likely to mention in the words ascribed to the lively *Aretine* :

tine: "*Io no'l conosco*"—I do not know him! This passed as delirious raving; so in truth it was: yet had I been in Spain, perhaps the good folks of the Inquisition might have kindly cured my fever by application of their salutary fire.

What escaped from me in my frenzy dwelt on the compassionate mind of Giuliana; at various times she discovered a half-repressed and half-indulged inclination to search into my religious opinions. Though you know there is nothing in the world that I detest so much as hypocrisy, I resolved on this head to play the hypocrite with my lovely companion, on account of her tender afflicted spirits. I was pleased, however, to observe, that in her own remarks on various convents that we have passed, she shewed herself perfectly purified from the nonsensical bigotry of her country. I find that Peverell had taken peculiar pains to eradicate from her mind all the notions of Catholic superstition; but at the same time he attached her most firmly to his own persuasion. With love for his assistant, what tenet might he not have stolen from her mind! what might he not have implanted on her tender heart! In conversing with her on these topics, I was so charmed with the strength and lustre of her natural understanding, that I suffered my own native sincerity to triumph over my prudence. I talked to her as if I was talking to you; and as she had led me to speak of Hume, Bolingbroke, and Voltaire, expressed my wonder that such a triumvirate, uniting all the powers of reason, eloquence, and wit, had not banished a decaying superstition from every cultivated mind. But all

our

our debates on this subject have ended as I believe every conference is apt to do between a man and a woman who differ very widely on any interesting theme. Arguments have no efficacy opposed to feelings. The man loses some portion of his esteem for the intellects of the woman; and the woman ceases to revere and to confide in the heart of the man. Do not suppose, however, that, like most theological disputants, we are become bitter enemies: no, never did you hear of two polemics so tender and benevolent to each other. Our disputes have indeed some vivacity, but not a particle of acrimonious malignity. You would have been much affected, had you heard the close of our last; when Giuliana, with that graceful energy of gesture so peculiar to herself, fell on one knee, and exclaimed, "O my dear Peverell, if I have loved, and continue to love thee, with a fidelity of affection agreeable to thy pure spirit, grant me, before I die, to behold this generous, but misguided young man, made as happy as thou wert upon earth in the knowledge of thy God!" The pathetic kindness of this little prayer pierced me to the soul. I kissed her hand, bathed it with a tear, and begged that we might drop the subject for ever.

So ended our conference last night in this ancient residence of the popes. Never did one of those keen sanctified sensualists labour to make a convert to their interest or their pleasure (which were the main points of their pursuit, you know, in this city), with a fervency of spirit equal to that of the dear devout Giuliana. And, zealous

as she is, I may give her the praise so rarely deserved by any Religionists in truly saying, that her charity is still superior to her zeal.

Before we retired to our separate pillows, the good creature, supposing the state of my bodily and mental health equally unsound, made me promise to rest a couple of days in this city, before I suffer myself to be shaken over the rocky roads of Provence. As she withdrew to her chamber she said, "I will engage to amuse you to-morrow; and I shall lead you to make an atonement for some of your past offences at the tomb of Laura, which we shall find, they tell me, within a very short walk from this house." She said this to me in her own soft language, and with a sweetness of manner that no language in the world could perfectly describe: her features in the moment expressed a mixture of melancholy and benevolent, that affected me in a marvellous degree. And I uttered to myself, as I withdrew from her to my own apartment,

"L'amour n'a rien de si tendre,
Ni l'amitié de si douce."

[Love has nothing so tender: Friendship nothing so sweet.]

My angelic fellow-traveller having dismissed me to my own chamber with a fancy so full of gentle ideas, procured me a dream of happiness in a fortunate visionary marriage with Cornelia--that I am destined perhaps to see only in a dream. On rising this morning, I found the scene very dismally altered: not only the delights of my vision

vision were fled; but the elements, as if angry with us for our insensibility to their smiles, have begun to frown upon us in a manner very unexpected: an unseasonable and violent rain has been falling for several hours; and my good governess Giuliana, who is full of fears for me without any for herself, has insisted on my not venturing abroad; and thus given me an opportunity of scribbling to you a letter enormously long, and as dull as the weather. As to Giuliana, she has deserted me, and is sallied forth, under the protection of Robert and a very ample umbrella. She has promised not to visit the tomb of Laura without me; and I rather suspect, from a word she dropt at her departure, that she is gone to a bookseller's in quest of some favourite religious author, whom she wishes to make her coadjutor in the grand project of my conversion.—Heaven bless her!—I begin to grow restless at her long absence, and often turn an anxious eye from my paper to the street. Oh, there she is; I spy her from the window this instant on her return; and with a face of such joyous animation, that, instead of having picked an old dusty theologian from an obscure shelf, I could almost believe she has conjured the soul of poor Peverell out of Paradise to attend her. What can this mean? But joy is ever welcome; and especially when it approaches in a form of such tenderness and beauty.—Here she is——

Oh, my dear Edmund, and no less dear Lucy, how kind, how considerate, how unlike the conduct of common friends, and worthy of your own quick and benevolent spirits, was your fortunate

tunate idea of dispatching a packet so delightful, with a chance of catching us on our road ! Your obliging friends, the two lively brothers, who are galloping towards Rome, luckily drove into Avignon, while the faithful Robert was waiting for his mistress at the door of the bookseller I have mentioned. My lord's valet happened to be an old acquaintance of Robert's ; and after shaking the honest fellow by the hand, informed him, that his master had letters for me. Robert instantly imparted these glad tidings to Giuliana, who, wishing to have the delight of delivering the packet to me herself, desired to have it brought to her where she was. This most welcome, this transporting packet, is now in my hands ; but before I reply to a line of it, I must exclaim, like some happy being whose name I have forgot : " Heaven, I had a soul to endure pain ; now give me one to support delight ! " I believe, indeed, that the good Giuliana thought me sinking into a new sort of delirium, when she beheld me kissing in an ecstasy that enchanting morsel of paper on which the blessed hand of Lucy assures me, " that, if Cornelia has a partiality for any man on earth, it is unquestionably for me ; " and then bids me " deserve her. " — Deserve her ! O ye powers who preside over love and felicity, what would I not do to deserve her !

" By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright Honour from the pale-fac'd moon."

Aye, verily, my dear Edmund, I would do
more for Love than the noble Hotspur could me-
ditate

ditate for honour.—But here comes my divine monitor, to moderate my rapture. I have scribbled these few hasty expressions of joy and gratitude, while *Giuliana* has been adjusting her dress for our visit to the church of the *Cordeliers*.—Your charming and magical letter seems to have given serenity to the sky, as well as to our hearts; 'tis a delicious afternoon, and we are just falling forth to pay our devotions at the grave of *Laura*.

“ To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept.”

I shall still add to this voluminous letter before we leave *Avignon*; but I will not lay down the pen, even for a short pause, without assuring you, that the tender *Giuliana* takes a most friendly, I may say, lively interest, in those transports of hope which have so kindly awakened in my re-animated frame; and still more does she share with me in the sincere joy that I receive from these utterly unexpected, and therefore more delightful assurances of your welfare, and your regard for the two travellers, who both love you and your sister with all the warmth that friendship and gratitude can inspire.

We are now just preparing for our departure from this remarkable city; whose curiosities have entertained us beyond my expectation: but it is to you, my dear friends, distant as ye are, that we are indebted even for this entertainment; for, had not your enchanting letter put us into tune, I should have continued to stare at the objects that
solicited

solicited my notice with all the speen of Smelfungus. What curious machines we are!—the human heart appears to me like a clock, good for nothing unless frequently wound up by the hand of affection: you have now converted mine into a fine time-piece of ornamental and lively mechanism, in which a multitude of the most cheerful little images are at work together, by means of that mighty spring which you have so happily put in motion.

I wish I may reward you by accomplishing every thing you wish with the father of Giuliana.—I think I shall; and ground my hopes on some particular lines in his character, which I have collected from her, and will tell you hereafter. I must now hastily close these voluminous dispatches; but not without telling you how ardently we wished that you and Lucy could have shared the pensive delight we enjoyed at the tomb of Laura. We were fortunate, however, in our attendant, having met with the most polite and intelligent priest that ever fell in my way. He was enchanted with Giuliana, who, inspired by the scene, repeated some passages of Petrarch with a grace and pathos of magical, that I expected to see the shade so Laura expressing her satisfaction in these pleasing honours. Giuliana will not allow the sonnet to be genuine which was found in the tomb, and which our books of travels exhibit to you as copied from the hand-writing of Petrarch.—Apropos of poets: the polite Cordelier I have just mentioned, observing our passion for poetry, and hearing that we were to travel across Provence, has kindly recommended to my perusal a Latin poetical

poetical epistle of the famous Chancellor de l'Hopital, describing the country we are to pass. Giuliana's bookseller has furnished me with a copy of this most respectable poet; I was before only acquainted with his political integrity. If I find his verses equal to the praise with which the friendly Cordelier recommended them to me, you shall hear more of them in my next: I can now only add, that Giuliana and I bestow on you, and the dear compassionate Lucy, our most cordial benedictions.—Adieu.

L E T T E R XIX.

CORNELIA TO MRS. AUDLEY.

A L A S! my very dear, and too penetrating Harriot, how much better do you understand your poor confused Cornelia, than she understands herself! How perfectly verified do I now find the words which you spoke to me with such tender raillery in pressing me to remain longer under your friendly roof: when you told me, that tearing my troubled heart from the comfort of your sympathetic conversation, to fortify it in the solitude of my own dreary mansion, was taking a child out of leading-strings, before it had strength to go alone! A child indeed, my sweet confidante! a very weak child, I confess!

and as unfit, I perceive, to be left alone as any infant of the nursery! Why do they tell us, that "solitude is the nurse of sense." It may be so perhaps with man—but with woman, I fear, it is only the nurse of folly, and the cherisher of passion. At least, my dear Harriot, I will honestly confess to you, that it proves so with your weak Cornelia.—What different hopes had I conceived! What a sage heroine did I fancy myself, in accomplishing my painful resolution of quitting the daily converse of that beloved friend, whose too tender indulgence to my dangerous prepossession I conceived to be a delicious poison to my quiet; if not to my integrity! In the delusive pride of good intention, I expected that the scenery here would restore me to peace; as I knew that every object around me would set the poor departed Sedley most forcibly before my eyes. I hoped to grow strong in the contemplation of his virtue; and to impress still deeper on my heart the kind religious admonition, which his dying tenderness bestowed on me. I am very far from feeling none of the impressions which I expected this habitation to make upon my mind. In some moments perhaps, I feel such impressions too strongly, like a person whose fits of feverish strength are succeeded by a proportionate weakness. You have entreated me to give you a very full and frank account of all my sensations; and surely you, who have taken such generous pains to tranquillize my bosom, have an unquestionable right to enquire into all its emotions. But do not tell me, dear Harriot, that I delight in very iniquitous self-accusation,

accusation, when I say, that I am sometimes too seraphic, and sometimes infinitely too like the weakest of mortals. When I set my foot in the library of poor Sedley, which is just as he left it, every volume seems to speak to me of its buried master; and the piercing eyes of his portrait, over the chimney, search my very soul; banish from me, as long as I behold them, every perilous propensity; and inspire me with a vain wish for the faculty of proving both a mother and a father to the dear boys he has left me.—I want not, indeed, any monitor to quicken the energy of my maternal feelings. My sweet little ones engross and amuse the greater part of my day. But there are hours, you know, my dear Harriot, in which our children cease to be our companions. When I have resigned my two lovely boys to their early rest, and read William to sleep, which he generally wheedles me to do, I have still some penfive hours to myself; and those very hours, perhaps, in which a tender heart is most inclined to indulge itself in foolish tenderness. As I am passionately fond, you know, of a contemplative walk at the close of day, I frequently take a late ramble alone to that side of the park from whence I can cast an eye of pious meditation upon the grave of my poor Sedley.—The spot never fails to draw me into a very soothing religious reverie; and at these times, indeed, “I am in Heaven with him.” But, alas! my Harriot, in proportion as I advance in my return to the house, my celestial thoughts fade away, and a living image steals upon my mind—the bewitching figure of the too

agreeable Seymour haunts me with more than ghostly importunity. He tells me, with that tender but respectful insinuation which baffles all resistance, in our visionary intercourse, "that, instead of being such a dangerous character as my dear dying monitor wished me to avoid, he is exactly the reverse; the very protector that Sedley wished me to acquire: full of the most disinterested love to me, and of the fondest affection to my promising little orphans."—Ah! my dear Harriot, this visionary intruder on my quiet has learned to plead his cause with all your fascinating arguments; but even these must not avail him; for, O my dearest Harriot, excellent creature as you are, in this one point, alas! I feel that Heaven is against you:

"Though rebel Nature holds out half my heart."

What a weak simpleton I am to continue talking thus incessantly of a man, whom I have promised myself not to think of! Why, indeed, should I think of him in any light, to awaken either wishes or fears? There is little chance of his proving an object of peril to me, since I am secured by the very circumstance which poor Eloisa prays for in the anguish of her devout apprehension. There are, Heaven knows, at present barriers enough between me and this soul-terrifying Seymour; as I may now perhaps say, with literal truth,

"Alps rise between us, and whole oceans roll."

Alas!

Alas ! who knows if he may ever repass the mountains and the seas that divide us ! He has already, we know, been once at the point of death, in his travels ; should he have a relapse on his journey, we shall have little chance indeed of ever beholding him again ; and this accomplished, this enchanting Seymour, whom I sometimes wildly consider as a character of terrific impiety, may lose perhaps his generous life in an act of the truest Christian charity that ever noble youth was engaged in. Ah, my dear Harriot, my foolish eyes are filled with tears at this idea ! yet my reason tells me there is another event much more probable, and my folly tells me that the pain I should feel——— But as you, my dear confessor, know all the suggestions of my folly, even before I discover them myself, I will add no more on this subject. I have sufficiently complied with your request, and given you, in the preceding pages of my letter, an internal view of my heart, and the various sensations that have shaken it on my return to this place. Let me entreat you to take no advantage of the weakness I have so honestly exposed to you. But let us faithfully adhere to the agreement we made in our last conference on this perpetual topic ; let us abstain from all arguments on both sides of the question, and leave my future destiny to time and chance. To assume a little honest pride, and convince you that your weak Cornelia is not quite so far gone in this desperate malady of the heart as my dear sympathetic Harriot supposes, I will shew you that I can scribble many pages to you upon other subjects.

subjects. Before I dispatch this packet by the rustic courier, who, to avoid the long circuit and delay of the post, is to pass regularly every fortnight by the short private road between us, I will endeavour to amuse you with two incidents of a very different nature, that have happened since my return.

The first is a little rural adventure, that affected me very much. As your sister Lucy has often talked of amusing us with a novel of her own composition, pray tell her, that I think her lively genius might raise an admirable little pocket volume from the singular story I am going to tell you. As I have not the talents of our dear Lucy for embellishment, I must content myself with giving you the simple matter of fact.

You know that the humane disposition of poor Sedley made him, not only the friend, but the physician of the poor; and during his long illness I have been used to act as his deputy in that character. As I was taking an afternoon walk with the children and their maid, near the private door of the park, that opens on the little common, I saw a lad running with great violence towards us, and opened the door, to enquire into the cause of his agitation. As soon as he could collect sufficient breath he informed me, that the maid at the farm, which you see from the gate I have mentioned, was fallen into terrible fits, and he was bid to run as fast as he could to the Great House for *Madam's* advice. I was very ready to obey the summons; and sending Nanny home with the children, I ordered

ed

ed her to dispatch the grave and experienced Philip after me, with some pungent restoratives. A walk of little more than half a mile brought me to the beautiful poor excruciated patient. I wish I had the talent of description, to give you a perfect image of the scene that now presented itself to my attention. Figure to yourself, my dear Harriot, a fair, florid, robust, luxuriant beauty of nineteen, under the horrid influence of agonies that made her large distorted eyes roll like meteors, and her two even rows of strong white teeth grind each other with convulsive ferocity: but I need not strive to paint for you a most distressing figure, of which you have almost a real portrait in your own house, from the pencil of Rubens. In the sublime sketch (which your good husband values so highly) of the Saint preparing to dispossess two Female Demoniacs, you have a very forcible representation of my unhappy patient at the moment I first beheld her. I should say, however, that she is a thousand times more beautiful than the youngest figure of Rubens, though her form has all that rich, muscular beauty in which he delighted. The humanity of the farmer and his wife had placed the poor creature in their best chamber; but her contorsions were so violent, that four very strong men could hardly hold her down on the bed, and could not prevent her exposing to our view her whole bosom, which seemed to be distended and tortured with internal fire, though it retained the most snowy whiteness that I ever beheld in a human skin. You will think her beauty must be great indeed, when

when I tell you, the idea of it forced itself upon me in spite of all the torment under which I beheld it, and which I felt the most sincere anxiety to relieve. By various applications I had soon the delight of releasing her from these horrible convulsions. I then desired to be left alone with her, and, seating myself on the side of her bed, prepared to administer in soothing conversation a cordial to her heart, from whence I suspected this tremendous malady to have arisen. Ah! my dear Harriot, what a furious distemper is this pestilent Love! How can you be so cruel as to aim at persuading me to resign my bosom to the dominion of such a Demon! All the terrific contorsions I have just described to you were in truth the sport of this tyrant. By expressing what I really felt, a great desire to be her friend, I drew from the good simple girl all the secrets of her agitated bosom. A young blacksmith, it seems, who has, I suppose, no resemblance to Vulcan but in his trade, has obtained an absolute sway over the heart of this rustic Venus; and the immediate cause of her tremendous agony was nothing more than this petty circumstance. The barbarous Cyclops, as Lucy would call him, had been at a neighbouring fair the preceding day, and had passed the abode of the damsel without bringing her a knot of remembrance, or calling to say a kind word to her, either as he went or as he returned. The sprightly Lucy, who thinks she has courage enough to whip the malicious little archer Cupid with his own broken arrows, would, I believe, with her benevolent pleasantry, have rallied

lied my simple patient out of her sufferings; and, by teaching her to laugh at her own fondness, would have her, in a new fit of mirthful shame, hide her fine blushing face under the bedclothes. But I, who am as far as possible from possessing our dear Lucy's invaluable faculty of laughing away pain either from myself or from another, I was obliged to pursue an opposite system for the relief of my interesting patient. Not having either the talent, or the disposition, to make her laugh with me, I indulged all my own weakness, and began, very sympathetically, to weep with her; there was, in truth, such a natural and affecting simplicity in the poor girl's account of the anguish of heart she had endured, and of her ineffectual struggle to suppress it, that I am almost inclined to think the gay Lucy herself would have wept at the recital. My sympathy was not without some good effect; by flattering the honest creature's pride, it seemed to give some energy to her mind, which had sunk under the complicated oppression of grief, indignation, and despair.

I endeavoured to persuade her, that this cruel neglect was a mere accident; the young man might be engaged in business for his master, that would not allow him to stop. "Hope the best, my good Jenny, said I; it is not likely that a man, who has given you such expectations, should desert so lovely and modest a girl as you are: I dare say, that by this time next year I shall not only have the pleasure of seeing you married, but I shall see you with a beautiful little infant in your arms." As I uttered these

cheering words an undescribable half-smile flashed like lightning across the dark clouds of her expressive countenance. It was the momentary triumph of fond imagination over settled sadness of heart.

Being very desirous to prevent a return of her convulsions, and thinking that a visit from her lover would most effectually secure her from a relapse, I offered to send for him immediately: but the good girl, with a becoming pride, petitioned against his being sent for; though I could easily perceive that her Soul panted for a sight of him. As the evening was now come, I prepared to leave her, requesting that she would be as quiet, and endeavour to get as much sleep, as she could in the course of the night: and I promised to visit her soon in the morning. She expressed her obligations to me, with an humble, yet passionate gratitude, that affected me much; and the more, as I discerned an alarming degree of wild inquietude in her features. On my return home, I amused myself with the project of setting the troubled heart of this fair simple maiden at ease for life. I charged the discreet Philip to set out by day-break, and conduct this beloved blacksmith to me by my early breakfast-hour, without letting him know the private business for which I wanted him. What a charming alacrity does any benevolent project give to the spirits! I had not waked any morning, since my return, with such comfortable and cheerful sensations, as I felt in rising to prepare for the reception of the rustic stranger. My eager fancy delighted itself with a vision of the great happiness

ness which I thought myself about to confer on two deserving creatures, who, though in an humble rank of life, possessed every thing that could render love a source of happiness to themselves, and an object of pleasing contemplation to their friends. I expected to see, in this fortunate son of Vulcan, a fine image of manly strength, and engaging simplicity, corresponding to the feminine graces of his fair admirer. I waited his arrival with great impatience, and anticipated in my thoughts the pleasure I should have in seeing the burst of surprize, joy, and gratitude, in the varying features of a young, honest, open, rural countenance. At length the punctual Philip returned: but what was my astonishment, when he led into my apartment an ill-made, ugly, fallow, sour-looking fellow, more fashioned to convulse the heart of beauty with terror, than with love! Half my sympathetic warm wishes for the marriage of poor Jenny, and, I am afraid, half my esteem for the good girl, died away at the first glance I cast on her grim-visaged swain. But when I recovered a little from my surprize, I began to hope that his understanding and his fidelity might make us some amends for the defects of his figure. I talked to him on his good fortune in being so sincerely beloved by a charming good girl, and asked if he had any plan of marrying her very soon. I wish, my dear Harriot, you could have beheld the half-farcical, half-tragic visage of the brute, when he replied in his rough dialect. "No, madam, I be'nt such a fool. There be
 "two wenches in our parish that I loves better
 "than

“than she.” I was now seriously mortified, for I lost all hope of accomplishing the little good that I had pleased myself with the prospect of doing: and I began to think the simple Jane had suffered herself to be sadly overcome by a very gross passion, for which the savage animal before me could furnish us with no decent apology. But in this idea I did the poor girl much injustice; for a very singular and striking incident, that I shall relate to you presently, convinced me that her passion had not only all the strength, but I may say all the chastity of genuine love. I resigned all my hopes, and indeed all my wishes, to form the match I intended! but I was still anxious to restore the health of the girl. I represented to her sullen swain, “that she had been very ill, and that I wished him to walk with me to see her, not for any matrimonial purpose, but merely to comfort her spirits, by the gentle civility of a friend.” These were niceties of behaviour, that the surly Cyclops did not well comprehend; and he seemed to be alarmed, as if I had proposed to catch him in a net more subtle than his old master Vulcan is said to have contrived on a different occasion. I thought he would at last refuse to attend me; but while I was putting on my hat, Philip by argument, or by ale, put his terrors and his perversity to flight; and we set forth all together for the house of the damsel. I went first alone into her chamber, and found that she had been afflicted with a return of her fits after my departure in the preceding evening. Her night had been restless; and all her features expressed that

that she had suffered much, not only from the absence of sleep, but from inquietude of heart. I soon informed her, "that I had been so lucky as to meet with her friend Ned Hewson (for such is the name given by mortals to this grim son of Vulcan); and that, upon hearing she was not well, he had kindly come with me to enquire after her health." A sparkle of fond delight and gratitude now flashed from her eyes. She was still in bed; and on my asking her if I should bring Hewson into her chamber, she replied, with a tender tremulous voice, "Yes, if you please, Madam." I now expected to see the triumph of impassioned nature over maidenly, bashful reserve; I imagined that poor Jane would burst into a transport of tears, and clasp her grizly undeserving idol in her arms. Indeed I had some doubts if propriety would permit me to stay, and gratify the curious wish, which I confess I felt very strongly to see the effect of their meeting. Thinking, however, that my medical character was a complete sanction for me, I ventured to stay; and am very glad I did so, as I beheld a scene very different from my expectations, and one that restored to the good girl all that portion of my esteem which I told you she had lost in the course of my reflexions on her amour. I called Hewson into her room, and as he approached her bed, she held out her hand to meet his with an air of very modest affection; then looking tenderly upon him, she replaced her head on the pillow, and, in the space of a minute, sunk into the profound and sweet sleep of an infant. Nothing could

could have surprised, nothing could have affected me more ; all the language in the world could not so well have expressed to me how completely I had relieved her poor tortured bosom, by the new and singular opiate which I had so luckily brought. The very striking contrast between her present deep delicious repose, and her past wild agonies, and wakeful melancholy, led me into a train of reflection on that formidable passion, which has so extensive and so instantaneous a power to produce either a tempest or a calm in the human bosom. While I sat a considerable time gazing intensely on the sweet sleeping countenance of poor Jenny, my eyes were filled with tears of pity for her, and perhaps of apprehension for myself. Love seems disposed to be a cruel enemy to us both, and there is in truth very little merit in all my anxious endeavours to be a friend to this hapless girl ; for, as my favourite Zara says,

“ I, alas, myself have been a slave ;
And when we pity woes which we have felt,
’Tis but a partial virtue.”

The cases, indeed, of poor Jenny and your Cornelia are not precisely the same ; yet, I fear, we are both destined to be wretched, from unfortunate and unsubdued affection. But it is high time to quit this weak digression, and proceed in my story.

“ Now then, with grief and shame, my Muse
The sequel of her tale pursues.”

I had

I had persuaded the half-humanized Ned Hewson to sit down, and wait with me the waking of my fascinated patient. When we had sat about half an hour, we heard a little tumult below stairs, and my companion was called down; as the noise did not break the sound slumber of Jenny, I sat quietly by her, without enquiring into the cause of the disturbance; but the farmer's wife soon brought me a surprising history of the tumultuous adventure: and what, think you, was the source of the noisy contention below? Why, truly, it had proceeded from the marvellous attractions and the licentious gallantry of my late companion, the hideous Ned Hewson: the parish officers had arrived in pursuit of him, and carried him off as their prisoner, and for what? No—not, as you suppose, to comfort and restore the credit of one poor pregnant weeper—but to make his election of two rival queens in that condition, who, alarmed, I suppose, by their swain's visit to me, and the rumour raised concerning it, had, in the same moment, and before the same magistrate, urged, with great vehemence, their equal claims to this tremendous, Alexander the Blacksmith.

But I am quite sick of this impudent ugly savage; and, as I dare say you will be so too, I will dispatch as briefly as I can the little residue of this long story. As I happened to want a laundry-maid, I prevailed on the farmer's wife to let me take Jenny immediately in that capacity. I knew that a change of place would be the best plan to quiet that anguish of heart which I was convinced the good simple girl would

would feel on the first hearing of an event, which I therefore wished to communicate to her myself with a preparatory sermon. When I had settled her in my own house, I informed her, that the perfidious Hewson, as a proper punishment for his various infidelity, was just condemned to matrimonial bondage with a bustling vixen, who would most probably render his future as turbulent as his past life has been licentious.

"Some natural tears she dropt, but wip'd them soon."

And although her features have still the traces of deep melancholy, I hope to restore her by degrees to content and chearfulness: though I know, alas! by experience, that when these blessings are once lost, they are not easily recovered. Thus it is, both in high and low life—Love leads to folly, either bodily or mental; and folly ends in bitter disquietude, if not in lasting wretchedness. But your Cornelia is determined, if possible, to grow wise. Pray encourage me in this sage resolution; and tell me, as I try perpetually to tell myself that the mother of two lovely heroic boys ought rather to think of playing the part of Minerva, than of a sighing Arcadian shepherdess; especially when I see, in the fate of poor Jenny, how a shepherdess is rewarded for her sighs. But I am now, in this sage humour, just going to take my evening walk of meditation; adieu, therefore, for to-day, my dearest friend. To-morrow I will devote some early hour to what I have promised you,

you, a history of a different adventure, in which the tragi-comical confusion fell chiefly on your devoted Cornelia. It grows late; so, dearest friend of my bosom, good night!

And now, good morning to you, my dear Harriot; I have just assigned to my dear little literary William his morning task, which is more a pleasure than a labour to him; and while my sweet Liliputian student is sitting quietly by my side, more compleatly absorbed in study than many sages of larger growth. I have resumed my pen, to tell you how ludicrously, and yet how painfully, I have been put to the blush by my whimsical West-country cousin. Though you have often heard me mention his name, I do not believe that I ever gave you a description of this odd mortal, and his singular manners. If any human creature was ever born under a laughing planet, he is the man. The very contrast between his name and his figure is a perpetual incitement to laughter. Suppose yourself, my dear Harriot, a very grave and starched matron, seated in due form to receive my relation on his first visit, could you, do you think, preserve the gravity of your countenance on hearing your servant announce *Mr. Small*, and then beholding a huge gigantic mortal six feet high, and so immoderately corpulent, that he would split into a couple of your common theatrical Sir John Falstaffs? Add to this, that the comical creature, with almost as much real wit as Sir John, has quite

quite as much jocularly of gesture as an ape. His animal spirits are by no means inferior to his bulk, and you may suppose therefore that his gaiety, like his figure, borders on the monstrous; yet it is hardly possible to be angry with him, let his jests be ever so absurd or insulting. A serious insult he can never intend. Indeed, I believe it is as little in his power to be serious on any occasion, as it is to be diminutive. The very affections that give an air of melancholy to other men, have in this creature a very comic expression. I believe in my conscience, that, if he was reading the funeral service (the most solemn of all language) over a deceased friend that he loved, he would utter it in such a manner, as to make you rather laugh than weep!

“And lift the soul upon a jig to Heaven.”

With such an exterior of grotesque enormity, he has one of the most upright, benevolent, and tender hearts in the world; and really performs the actions of a Cato or Aristides with the fantastic and rogueish grimaces of a Scaramouch.

This very strange being, whom I had not seen for three years, entered my dressing-room the other day, while William and I were reading together by ourselves. I wish you could have seen the dear boy's look of astonishment, not so much at the first appearance of our gigantic cousin, as at his curious mode of saluting me, which William appeared to be in some doubt whether he should applaud or resent; indeed, it was not very clear, in the first moment, whether

ther his salutation was that of a friend or a foe. The giant caught me up in his arms exactly as you would take up a little girl of three years old ; and first swinging me round, then gave me a kiss, and said, " I am come, my fair cousin, to visit you for a few hours, just to brush away the cobwebs of solitude and sorrow from this pretty little head of yours." He then paid some fine compliments, between jest and earnest, to my understanding, and expressed his great joy at not finding me *in weeds* : " Your widow in weeds, cried he, is the silliest looking animal in the creation ; she is like a young Armadillo—an Armadillo, cousin William, is a pig in armour, that hides every thing but his nose. Should not you laugh to see such a droll creature?"—" Can he fight so?" cried William, with eagerness and spirit. " No, my brave cousin, replied the Droll ; and there lies the best part of my simile : the pig's armour, instead of proving a real defence, only invites the merry mischievous fellows, that catch sight of it, to try if they cannot drive a pin through it."—At this abominable rate he rattled on for about half an hour ; sometimes making me laugh immoderately, and sometimes distressing me almost to tears. William, by degrees, became very familiar with him, and really made some very spirited and clever replies to his odd speeches. At last this half pleasing, half-provoking, and very ponderous jester, said to me, " Well, my sweet cousin, you must not think of moping alone in this noble place ; it is high time you should have some such pretty little fairy-like fellow

fellow as I am, beginning to dance about you like a Jack-o'-Lantern, to enliven the darkness of widowhood. What a pity it is that my dear, nervous, dainty wife did not take her flight to Paradise, as she threatened to do when I saw you last!" I should tell you, my dear Harriot, with all this wild rhodomontade, he is passionately fond of his wife, who is indeed nervous in the extreme, and perhaps not the less so for his making a perpetual joke of those fine lady-like appearances which her complaints, more than her natural disposition of mind, have given to her character. The visible languor of her frame is very striking; yet, in spite of that languor, she has contrived to enliven this boisterous giant with a very numerous family; and some of its branches, he tells me, are grown as riotous and as noisy as himself. But I return from this digression, to the rattling discourse he was addressing to me. "What a charming match, cousin, you and I should have made in that case! Hey, my dear William, he continued, catching up the boy in his arms, should not you like such a dapper little play-fellow as I am, for your new papa?" William, when he reached the ground again, stared a moment, as if pondering on the question; and then said, with some drollery of manner, "I do not believe we have a bed in our house that is big enough to hold you." "Why, you ungracious rogue, said the giant, putting on a pretended sternness of countenance, who should you like better than me for a papa?" As my evil genius would have it, the little urchin, without being in the least
daunted

daunted by the feigned austerity of this demand, instantly replied, "Mr. Seymour."—Ah! my dear Harriot, you will easily guess what a countenance I had at the sound of that name, repeated by my arch cousin, with a most significant echo, and a whistle at the end of it, that seemed like the view-halloo, which encreases the joy of the hunter, and the palpitation of poor Puss. I attempted, in an awkward, embarrassed manner, to account for the child's partiality; but my gay vociferous relation soon interrupted me by saying, "Ah! my dear little widow, say no more!—say no more! I see clearly, by this crimson banner (patting my cheek) what a happy conqueror is quartered in the castle of your heart—No! no! not a syllable of protestation!—Nay! my good little woman, do not look so seriously distressed!—Upon my soul, I am very glad it is so; I was afraid you might have been foolishly taught to think it proper to be solemn, and sober, and sad, for a century; which, in your situation, would be very nonsensical."—By a deluge of words, half jocular, half tender, and all full of real benevolence, he utterly prevented my giving him a fair explanation of my foolish embarrassment; and he is gone, in the full persuasion that I am passionately in love with Seymour, and determined to marry him. I am such a simpleton as to have been much flurried, and heartily vexed, by this incident, though I have such perfect confidence both in the honour and discretion of my rattling cousin, that I am convinced he will not mention the idea he has conceived to any living

living soul, except perhaps his wife, who is a good woman and no gossip. Still I am vexed; but I have tried to play the philosopher; and I make at least some use of my vexation, by giving you such a full history of it as may, I hope, contribute to your amusement. Pray tell Lucy, that observing how much her charming long letters delighted you, I grew jealous of her, and determined to beat her by the length of my scrawls, though I cannot rival the brilliancy of her epistles. When I cast my eye on the size of this, it seems to have been written expressly to make you recant one of your favourite maxims, that a letter can never be too long from a person you love. I shall forgive you, therefore, my dearest Harriot, if you think me too prolix; but I shall not forgive you easily, if you do not observe, to my credit, how seldom the name of Seymour is repeated in these multitudinous pages, written, as they are, from a heart that delights to display itself to the invaluable bosom-friend of

Your most sincere and affectionate

CORNELIA.

L E T.

LETTER XX.

FROM HENRY SEYMOUR TO EDMUND
AUDLEY.

Antibes.

LET the sea, my dear Edmund, which smiles upon us here with a fair and inviting face, plead my excuse for sending you, once in my life, a very brief epistle. I may well claim the privilege of being laconic, after filling so many pages as I contrived to scribble to you, in the course of our slow but agreeable progress over the fragrant rocks of Provence. In perusing my two last packets*, how will you, and my gentle lecturer Lucy, stare at each other, with looks of satisfactory surprize, to find me playing the new and solemn characters of critic and antiquarian by the side of my bewitching fellow traveller. But the *felucca* that I have engaged to transport us to Genoa is completely prepared for our reception. This *felucca*, let me tell you, is such a stout, handsome, and commodious little vessel, that the timid Lucy herself would sail in it without a fear. I question, however, if we are able to sail at all, for at present there is hardly a breath of air stirring; but we have a little sturdy

* These two letters were lost.

swarthy crew, (who look to me so ill-favoured that I could almost suppose them the identical galley-slaves described in Don Quixote) perfectly able and ready to brush the deep with their oars.—Adieu. Let us now embark, as I know we shall, with your ardent good wishes for the prosperity of our voyage. In proportion as the incomparable Giuliana draws nearer and nearer to the residence of her father, her feeling heart palpitates with filial anxiety. I sympathise with her most cordially in these sensations; yet I cherish a comfortable persuasion, that I shall speedily gain a great influence over this curious old marble-hearted merchant. I have endeavoured to penetrate all the minutest peculiarities of his character, by the reports of his daughter: one point I am happily sure of, we shall run no hazard of differing on any religious ideas. This keen Italian, by passing several years of his early life in *our country*, contracted a most cordial contempt for the superstitions of *his own*; and he hates a priest, I find, as heartily as I do. As the energetic old humourist Johnson says, “I love a *good bater* ;” and in my next I hope to send you a lively proof that, to hate the same objects, with reciprocal energy, is no bad introduction to a solid and useful friendship. I should be very prolix on this subject, were it not high time for us to get on board. Giuliana salutes you both, as I do, from the bottom of an affectionate and grateful heart: I must add the name of my dear Cornelia, for the mere pleasure of writing it, having no time to speak even of her; and, if I had, what could I say

say, that your friendship will not say for me?—
Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Genoa.

REJOICE, my dear Edmund, in the success of your ambassador. Again I say rejoice; for I am myself quite intoxicated with joy, while I inform you that your angelic Giuliana is restored to the roof, to the bosom, of her reconciled, her transported father.

To moderate the pride of my present exultation, let me remember and declare, that I am not only indebted to your friendship for the honour of my mission, but I owe entirely to your excellent advice all the delight of its success. Yes, thou dear philosopher, whose knowledge of nature, and whose cool judgment in the conduct of life is so infinitely superior to mine, I must frankly own to you, that if I had been destitute of your directions for the management of this arduous business, the native impetuosity of my temper would have utterly defeated all the benevolent wishes of my heart, and the doors of the angry, the exasperated father, would have been closed, perhaps,

H

for

for ever against the most virtuous and most tender child that ever triumphed over paternal rage and resentment. In truth, I have had some fiery trials to endure; and, I flatter myself, you will applaud me for having sustained them, not only as your confidential friend, but as your affectionate and obedient disciple. I fear I shall give you but a broken irregular narrative of those affecting scenes that I would wish to relate to you very circumstantially; for my nerves, which had not perfectly recovered from the shake they received in my late illness, have been so variously convulsed in our recent adventures, that I do not seem to have one steady fibre in my frame; and, in the tumult of my present joy, though it is certainly a joy of the chastest kind, I am more ready to laugh and cry, by fits, like an hysterical woman, than to sit down and commit to paper a long and methodical relation of those events which I am engaged, both by honour and inclination, to tell you minutely.

Having collected my thoughts a little, and having just received on the back of my right hand an inspiring kiss, accompanied by a tear, from Giuliana, who is at this moment in a weeping transport of gratitude to you and to all of us, I will endeavour to accomplish my promise, and give you with the most exact fidelity all the agitating occurrences of our arrival and reception. Our voyage was pleasant, though not speedy; for we had so little wind, that we were obliged to make continual use of our oars. One of our laborious crew being disabled by sudden illness, I ventured to amuse myself by rowing in his place, though the
poor

poor fellow resigned his oar very reluctantly, and would, I believe, have pulled to his last gasp if I had not insisted on relieving him, more for my own amusement than for his advantage. He told me truly, that I should find it much harder work than I supposed; but you know my passion for manly exercise of all kinds, and how apt my spirit is to give credit to my body for more strength than it has. The tender *Giuliana* remonstrated in vain, by kindly reminding me that my health was far from being confirmed. Man is an obstinate animal, and he is never, I believe, more tempted to overstrain his force than when a lovely woman beseeches him to spare it. I sustained, however, the task I had imposed on myself, beyond the expectation of my companions; though, to confess the truth, I felt more exhausted than I would own to them. And I should not have related to you so trifling an incident, had it not produced a very singular and happy consequence at a future period, as you will see in due time; but, as my history is to be conducted with exact order, I have many things to tell you first.

As we had the advantage of very serene weather, and an early moon, I contrived, for various reasons, not to land in Genoa till after the close of day. Our approach to the city, under the soft lustre of a clear and delicious evening, afforded me one of the most singular and enchanting views that I ever beheld: I could have paused for some hours, to survey the placid beauty of this semicircular port, and its rich crescent of stately palaces, with gardens on the roof of each, had not the heart of *Giuliana* presented to me a

much more engaging subject of contemplation. I am, you know, a passionate admirer of all picturesque scenery; but it is not, I am persuaded, in the power of nature to present any prospect to the eye so perfectly fascinating as the view of a lovely female heart under strong agitation.

Our present moonlight voyage very forcibly brought to my thought your moonlight visit with my companion to the tomb of Peverell. Giuliana was then under the recent impulse of distracted love and outrageous sorrow; yet I question if she could feel more at that time than she felt in the first moments of her return to her native city. Her anxious desire to regain the affection of her father, and to become the minister of his salvation, has given a tenderness and a fervor to her spirits beyond every thing that I ever saw in woman. In our passage from where we landed to the post-house, which is our inn, we had to pass the house of Signor Pinelli. In crossing the door of her father, as she hung upon my arm, I felt a shuddering through her frame that affected me like an electric shock; having passed the door, she revived at every step, like a person who has had the courage to cross an imaginary ghost. I looked back to see how it was with our little Giannina, who followed us close behind; and, affected as I was myself, I could not forbear laughing to observe the good simple girl, who was at that instant before the door of the old Signor, fortifying herself by the sign of the cross. Giannina, I believe, is not more of a Catholic than her mistress; yet so deep does superstition sink into an infant mind, that in her present terror she had recourse

recourse to a ceremony which she had probably determined to relinquish for ever. But I am dwelling too long on petty circumstances. Behold us now safely arrived at our *Osteria*. I shut my females into a chamber together, to prevent their being discovered; and engaged my civil host in a private conversation, to collect from him all possible information concerning the old Seignor. He behaved, I find, on the elopement of his daughter, as Italians generally do under the influence of resentment, with a peculiar vehemence both of language and conduct. As fiery in his indignation as king Lear, he publicly

“disclaim’d all his paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood.”

And being anxious to provide himself with heirs more worthy, in his idea, of the opulence he has to bequeath, “he is now (said my intelligent informer) on the point of marrying a young widow. Ah, Seignor, added my shrewd host, when angry old gentlemen endeavour to punish their young daughters for a little natural indiscretion, they are very apt to play the fool themselves; and forget that they have not the plea of youth to excuse it.” My host concluded with many compliments to my countrymen; and gave me to understand, that if he had himself a fine daughter, he should be proud to give her in marriage to an English Cavalier, without any scruples concerning her body or her soul. As soon as I escaped from my talkative landlord, I hastened to tell Giuliana the matrimonial news of her father. She knows the widow perfectly; and said,
with

with great probability, that if he had been actually married to her he must have been completely wretched for life. But I am come, she added with a fervency of filial and religious hope—I am come, I trust, in a blessed hour, to save him, not only from eternal, but even from temporal infelicity.” How sweet and innocent are these illusions of affectionate piety! As far, however, as the projected wedding is concerned, it is probable there may be no illusion in the ardent hopes of our incomparable Giuliana. But I must not anticipate. Let me observe, if I can, the due order of time in the long and interesting history that I have undertaken to give you, with that minuteness to which you are so fully entitled, from all your generous attention to the excellent creature whose adventures and whose feelings you will expect me to describe.

We talked over various plans for gaining admittance to this offended father. I was half inclined to shorten the anxious and agonizing suspense of Giuliana, by trusting entirely to the force of nature, and to the tender effect which the sight of a returning affectionate child, without any preparation, might produce in a parental bosom. But, on mature reflexion, I chose to adhere very scrupulously to the conduct you had most kindly and very wisely prescribed to us. I went alone to the house of Signor Pinelli, taking only a short billet of supplication from Giuliana, which she dated from England according to your advice; and I resolved, as you recommended, not to let the angry old man suspect that his daughter was returned to Genoa till I had somehow

how contrived to soften his resentment, and to alarm either his affection or his pride with the dread of such evils as might naturally overtake a desolate young woman in a foreign land.

As I had heard of his giving peremptory orders that no Englishman should be suffered to enter his doors, I thought of personating a French traveller; but Giuliana assured me, I might safely trust to the kindness of her father's elderly and chief domestic, Pietro, for admission to a conference, if not with his master, at least with himself. She was perfectly right; the honest fellow wept like a parent, more than a servant, in perusing a scrap of paper with three lines, addressed to him, by the universally idolized Giuliana; but in shewing the tenderness of his own regard for her, he gave me a still stronger impression of the obstinate anger which had raged without any remission in the fiery spirit of her father. He deplored, that, old and attached to her as he was from her infancy, he was not allowed even the privilege of naming his dear mistress in the presence of her exasperated parent. He spoke openly and warmly of his master's new and unpromising matrimonial prospect; and he expressed a wish, that amounted almost to a resolution, of pursuing the steps of the divine fugitive Giuliana, and dying in her service. He laboured to dissuade me from the attempt that he conceived to be very painful and fruitless, to melt the obdurate heart of Pinelli; but as soon as I acquainted him with the death of Peverell, his ideas were totally changed; his anxiety for the destitute Giuliana amounted to agony, and I believe the honest creature would have

have introduced me to his master had he been sure of being stabbed the next moment for that act of disobedience. We both trembled, I believe, at the instant of that awful ceremony; but, as soon as the good Pietro flung open the door of a magnificent library, I advanced with the firmest countenance I could, to salute the majestic and solitary merchant. He had been reading alone. Represent to yourself, my dear Edmund, a very noble figure, arrayed in black; in whose form and features I immediately discovered an engaging, though stern resemblance, to those of the beautiful Giuliana; a figure exhibiting, to my apprehension, that simple dignity of character which we have frequently admired together in some quiet portraits of Titian; and had this figure been presented to us on canvass, we should, I think, have guessed it to be a person of eminence in a free republic. But this striking appearance of calm grandeur was the vision of a moment. The Signor rose at my entrance, darting first a look of surprize upon me, and then of anger towards Pietro, who rapidly withdrew, to elude the order he expected for conducting me unheard from the apartment in which I had intruded.

I accosted the merchant, and stopped him before he had time to re-open his door. "I am come, Signor," I exclaimed, "to announce to you the death of a man who has for some time been the object of your just indignation!—a very horrible accident has put a sudden end to the life of Peverell; allow me to hope, that all your anger and all your unhappiness may be buried in his grave." The merchant stood motionless. His
pride

pride seemed to contemplate in the event that I announced to him all his injuries avenged by the interposition of Heaven ; but his native dignity restrained him from bursting into any indecent exultation. He surveyed me with a gloomy sternness and features that expressed the unexpected gratification of a dark and imperious passion ; but he thought it proper to say, " The life or death of a distant ruffian are matters of no moment to me : I have only to forget, for my own peace, that such a villain ever existed." " With all my heart," I hastily replied : " let his existence be forgotten : he was no friend of mine. But surely, Signor, neither you nor I can wish to forget that you have a most lovely daughter, who, though divided from you by the ocean, seems to exist only in your life ; and expresses to you, in this letter, her fond filial wishes of being restored for ever to your parental bosom." I here presented to him the letter of Giuliana, which he eagerly seized, for no purpose but that of thrusting it into one of the candles by which he had been reading ; and while the paper was blazing in his hand, he said to me, fiercely, " Let this convince you, young stranger, that I have no longer a child ; and trouble me no more with vain petitions from a wanton ungrateful fugitive, against whom I have closed and fortified my heart for ever." This speech was uttered with such a stedfast appearance of inflexible severity, that I was half petrified at the sound of it ; but rallying my dismayed spirits to the utmost of my power, I pursued my point in the following manner.

H 3

" You

“ You will not think it, Seignor, a very difficult point to free yourself from my intrusion, when I assure you, with the strictest truth, that I have no purpose to answer in my visit to you, but the purpose of pure humanity ; that I am led to your house, only by compassion for your angelic unfortunate daughter, and by good will to yourself.” I now perceived that the old man began to listen to me with milder attention. I derived new spirit from that idea. I launched out into a full, perhaps a vain account, of my own station in life. I gave him a circumstantial narrative of the singular, the innocent, the magnanimous conduct, of his child. I spoke of you, my dear Edmund ; and you will believe I spoke of you with all the enthusiasm of friendship. In short, I spoke so long and so eagerly, that I found my strength fail on a sudden, and I was on the point of fainting. The old man was affected ; with great gentleness he placed me on a sofa, and called for refreshments. As I imputed my sudden languor to what I believe was its real cause, the fatigue I had foolishly drawn on myself by the incident of the oar, Pietro brought in some very fine fruit, with cakes and cordial wine ; and the honest fellow cast upon me such a look of solicitous enquiry, his keen countenance expressed such a mixture of concern for me, and of hope for his mistress, that, half dead as I was, I could hardly help exclaiming, “ Honest Pietro, we shall triumph at last ! ” The merchant himself, with that singular union of dignity and tenderness in his manner which we have so much admired in his daughter, exerted himself assiduously for my relief, yet
without

without uttering a syllable that pointed towards a reconciliation with Giuliana. He observed, and I believe very truly, that a reclining posture had saved me from absolute fainting; and he begged me not to attempt any further discourse till the rich wine, whose restorative influence he boasted, had recruited my exhausted frame. As the giddiness of my head had been relieved by my position, I now felt myself as strong in mind as I was weak in body; and, as you know, my dear Edmund, how I love to seize every opportunity of acting with a romantic spirit, you will not be surprized at my resolving to try the influence of this spirit on the dignified merchant. While I still reclined, and he stood before me with a glass in his hand, strongly pressing me to swallow his never-failing cordial, "Dear Seigneur," I exclaimed, "is it possible that you, so charitable to a stranger, can shut your heart against your own angelic daughter! If it is possible, let me rather expire, from fatigue and emptiness, in your presence, than owe my life to a being with a heart so unnatural!" In saying this with a trembling voice, I gently put aside the glass that he was presenting to me. The old man was half provoked and half softened by my odd behaviour. "I fear," said he, looking down upon me with a stern and penetrating glance, "you are an ungovernable young man, rashly wandering from your own parents, and losing your senses in a foolish passion for this unworthy girl." On hearing this surmise, I burst into a passionate protestation of my genuine and pure friendship for Giuliana. I avowed, without naming her, my real attachment and hopes of marriage with

with Cornelia. To convince him of my truth, I offered to relinquish the immediate pretended object of my travels, which I had told him was to escort a sickly sister of mine to a relation we had in Italy; and begged that we might guide him to his daughter in England, and return again all together. The Signor was greatly touched by the frankness of this proposal, and said, with an air of mild deliberation, "Whatever your designs may be, you are a very extraordinary and interesting visiter: if I have wronged you by my suspicions, I ask your pardon, and I entreat you no longer to reject the cordial for which you have such visible occasion." As he held one hand towards me with the wine, I seized the other, and kissing it, replied, "I have, indeed, my dear Signor, occasion for your kindness; but would you shew it most effectually for my relief, drink yourself the glass you offer me—drink it to the health and happy return of your child—I will pledge you with my whole soul, and, instead of declining your favours, will then bless you with tears of gratitude for your generous hospitality." My tears, however, would not wait for this appointed moment; they gushed as I spoke, upon the hand of the merchant.

"There is no contending with you," said the half-melted father, and pouring out a second glass for me, he complied with my intreaty, by drinking the first, yet he could not prevail on his lips to utter the name of Giuliana, or to express even a wish for her return; he only said to me, in a sort of murmur, "May the penitent you plead for deserve so disinterested a friend!" "She deserves

deserves the friendship of earth and heaven," said I, starting up in a transport of exultation at having succeeded so far, and venting the fulness of my heart in the most fervent vow for the affectionate re-union of a child and parent so worthy of each other, and so unhappily divided. I at last eagerly swallowed the *Lacryma Christi**, which my courteous host had so repeatedly recommended as the best of restoratives; my stomach, indeed, acknowledged the excellence of his cordial; but my heart and soul felt a still warmer and more delightful effect, from my prospect of bending him to my wishes. He filled my glass again, and, to animate me still farther, drank himself, in a very friendly manner, to my perfect recovery. His generous wine seemed to operate as happily towards opening his own heart, as it did in relieving the languor of my frame: yet, observing how much he laboured to wave all discourse on his daughter; I thought it best for me to gain, if possible, some portion of his esteem, by talking on other topics, before I pressed him again on that point. I had studied the peculiarities of his character, and now endeavoured to turn them to my advantage. How adroit are we made by any passionate and benevolent desire! Of all talents in the world I have the least pretensions to the talent of flattery; yet I contrived to flatter the penetrating merchant very successfully, on his republican dignity, on the spirit of his ancestors, who defended his native city from the tyranny of France, on the native and improved vigour of his mind, in despising, not only the gross superstitions of his country, but every species of superstition.

* A wine so called,

tion. Here you know, my dear Edmund, I was galloping on my favourite ground: the subject, and the delightful end that I hoped to gain by introducing it, assisted by the potent wine I had drank, inspired me, I believe, with unusual eloquence; for the old merchant, while I kept clear of his daughter, appeared to sympathise with me in every sentiment. The more I talked to him, the more he seemed to covet my acquaintance; and at last I flattered him into such a vein of good humour, that he insisted on my making his house my home while I stayed in Genoa. This offer was the great object of my ambition; and I thought myself a most capital politician in having obtained it; but, instead of replying to it by a profusion of thanks and scruples, I exclaimed, "No, my good Signor, I must not trust myself with such an enchanting companion; for you have already made me forget, not only my own infirmities, but those of my poor sister, who is now waiting for me at your post-house; and if I stay any longer, the poor terrified girl will conclude that I have been robbed and murdered in your streets." In saying this, I prepared to take my leave for the night. The courteous Pinelli insisted on paying his respects to the lady, and conveying her from an house so unfit for a female invalid, to his own comfortable mansion. His carriage was ordered for this purpose. With some difficulty I prevailed on the polite old man to let me be his ambassador, on an absolute promise of returning to him, with my sister and all our servants, in the course of the evening. I was now in such an agitation of triumph, and impatience
to

to relieve the suspense of Giuliana, that I could not wait for the carriage; but, desiring that it might follow me, I flew to release my dear anxious prisoner, and bless her with the tidings of my success. Her joy was great, but still tempered with apprehension, as I had too frankly told her all that honest Pietro said of her father's implacability. She was afraid that his quick spirit would catch fire on the discovery of deception, and that, instead of giving us a cordial welcome as I presumed, he would spurn us from his door. I was not, in deed, perfectly free from fear myself on this point; but I endeavoured to strengthen the hopes of Giuliana. "O, said the divine creature, all I mean is to prepare you with patience to endure calmly any sudden burst of his resentment: as to myself, it is my duty to suffer, and to embrace all the indignities that can be put upon me; and what would I not most chearfully undergo to regain his affections, and to lead him by degrees to a worthier sense of his God!" Such was the devout enthusiasm of this incomparable daughter. She had no fears for herself, but all for me and her father, because she thought that in our tempers we are both precipitate, and equally destitute of religious regulation.

While she was giving me a divine lecture, her father's carriage arrived; her heart fluttered at the sound of it. Having muffled up both her face and Giannina's, with a charge not to discover themselves till they were at the feet of the venerable Signor, I thrust them hastily into the carriage, and we were rapidly driven to his door. Conceive the palpitation of our hearts, my dear
Edmund,

Edmund, at this moment. Honest Pietro let us in ; and as both the females were effectually disguised, by their English habits, and the concealment of their faces, he marched before us without any suspicion that his dear mistress was so near him, to usher us into a saloon, where the Seigneur, with a little collation, was waiting to receive us. I stepped before the females, and said, " Forgive me, my dear Seigneur, for presenting to you, under the name of my sister, the lost, but unsullied jewel of this house !"—Giuliana was now kneeling before him, and, seizing his hand in an agony of tenderness and terror, he stood, for an instant, firm, with an averted countenance. I never endured, in my life, an instant of such pain. But Nature soon declared herself our confederate : the old man had not power to persist in his proud indignation, and catching up his lovely suppliant child, he burst into tears, and pressed her to his bosom. I wept as plentifully, and had as little power of speaking ; but my heart shouted, *Victoria!* and seizing the little Giannina in my arms, I ran off with her, to reward the good soul of Pietro, who was standing in a trance of awful amazement on the outer side of the half-open door. The honest old domestic was frantic with joy when I sportively threw the returned little fugitive into his arms. After receiving a million of his rapid benedictions, I ventured to return to a scene still more interesting and more delightful, which I had quitted chiefly from a desire of paying the most delicate respect to the sanctity of parental emotions.

As

As soon as I appeared again in the presence of the relenting father, Giuliana quitted his hand, and advancing towards me with a chaste familiarity and tenderness, which you who know her, and you only, can perfectly conceive, she embraced me, and exclaimed, "My guide, my brother! O that our dear Edmund and Lucy were here, to share with us in the sensations of this blessed hour!—but they are present in you;" and embracing me again, she added, "You will tell them how all their divine goodness to me is felt at this moment, not only by their grateful Giuliana, but her kind, her dear sympathetic father." She now put my hand into his; and the strongly affected old man attempted to express his obligation; but his heart was yet too full for words: he could only speak to me by a pressure of the hand; but what language could equal the expressive force of that pressure! My heart felt it in every fibre; and I declare to you, that I question if a touch of tenderness from the hand of my adored Cornelia herself could have given me more exquisite delight.—Ah, my dear philosopher, you and I have hitherto been fools in our notions of pleasure; if we wish to experience the keenest and purest of all human delights, let us hasten to be fathers. O Pinelli, how exquisite must be thy transport in this event, since the mere sight of it is so delicious to a stranger who has known thee but a day!

I have still a thousand things to tell you, dearest friends, though I may literally say I have been writing to you from

"Earliest morn to latest eve;"

allowing

allowing very short pauses for necessary refreshment. The good merchant very wisely put us all soon to bed last night : to-day, therefore, I have dedicated entirely to the pen ; not only from my extreme eagerness to impart to you, at full length, the glad tidings of our success, but from a desire of leaving my interesting host and his incomparable daughter as much as possible to themselves, that they might unburthen their full hearts to each other.

I have not yet had an opportunity of learning from Giuliana the particulars of their private conversation ; yet I am very anxious to do so, as I have an unpleasant apprehension of this young widow who has entangled the old merchant : as we have so happily restored to him his angelic child, it would grieve my soul to have her future life poisoned by his completion of these unpromising nuptials. —

“ Well, my dear governess, I obey ; and will only add a few syllables more to the enormous packet.” This is my obedient reply to a certain guardian angel, commonly called Giuliana, who has just told me, that I shall write myself dead if I do not desist a little from my labour. The Seigneur also says, that my letter must be dispatched, to save the post ; so, exhausted as I am, let me promise you another epistle in a very few days ; and conclude with our united benedictions.

LETTER XXII.

FROM MISS AUDLEY TO MRS. AUDLEY.

[sent with the preceding letter from Seymour.]

READ, read, and rejoice, my good Harriot! Thanks to the chaste stars! and double thanks to the virtue and kindness of our spirited and excellent young traveller! I am enabled to make the very return I most wished to your friendly and delightful communication, in restoring to you that enchanting picture which our dear frank Cornelia has given you of her own feeling heart. How happy am I to join her interesting pages to pages not less interesting, from a hand that will now, I trust, in due time, be most happily and holily joined to hers.

How will her lovely quick eyes devour the history I send you! Methinks I see all her doubts, her terrors, her scruples, her resolutions, melt away as she advances in the perusal. Our benevolent Edmund is transported with the conduct and success of his young ambassador; and pronounces him fairly entitled to paradise, from his various merits in this arduous trial: the paradise we mean is, the heart of your Cornelia; of which we call you the Saint Peter: we beseech you, therefore, fair saint, to throw open the
blessed

blest gate over which you preside, and secure free admission to this meritorious aspirer.

In sober serious truth, my dear Harriot, we entreat you to make the most of the present glorious opportunity, to strengthen the interest of this engaging Seymour; not only in the heart of Cornelia, where Love and Nature, I fancy will sufficiently befriend him, but in the less soft, though amiable mind, of your excellent husband.

Ah, my dear Harriot, I cannot conceal from you the dread that torments me in the midst of our joy. Do not, with the usual weakness of a wife, betray me to my brother; to whose endearing virtues be assured that my heart does full justice, while I tremble for the possible consequence of his inflexible integrity: you will understand what I mean. Believe me, my dear sister, we have both of us a thousand reasons for the most tender caution on this very delicate point.

Should your husband now oppose the union of Seymour and Cornelia, from any motives of religious apprehension, farewell, not only to the future happiness of that interesting and deeply enamoured pair; but farewell to that sweet peace and harmonious affection which has long prevailed, so uncommonly, and so delightfully, among the different branches of our house. I can perceive already, that all the boasted philosophy, of our tranquil Edmund will not be sufficient to prevent his pride from resenting any opposition of the kind I have mentioned against the
young

young friend to whom his heart is now acknowledging its recent and indelible obligation.

A word to the wife, though it comes from an affectionate simpleton, may be of some use ; forgive me, therefore, my dear Harriot, if there is folly, as I suspect there is, in the gloominess of my fears ; and continue to love me for the warmth and sincerity of my affection.

L E T T E R XXIII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY ;

[in answer to the preceding.]

FORGIVE you, my dear tender-hearted monitor ! ask not forgiveness when you deserve the fondest thanks. I have reproached myself a thousand times for the idle words ! dropt in our hasty interview, when I confided to you the charming packet of our Cornelia. Your benevolent spirit has, I find, by the anxious kindness of your letter this moment received, dwelt very seriously on those idle words. After I bade you farewell, I was apprehensive that you might do so ; your good-nature, which is naturally alive and solicitous for your friends, has acquired, from the singular incidents of your life, a peculiar degree of timidity, where the happiness

ness of those you love is concerned. From this, my dear girl, and from my foolish jest, by which I have added to the accidental bent of your tender mind, you have harboured an idea very painful to your own friendly bosom; and allow me to say, a little injurious to a certain *unblameable* creature, to whom, among other infinite obligations, I owe the great pleasure I feel in giving and receiving from you the name and affection of a sister.

Now do not say "No;" nor think, my dear Lucy, that I am talking to you with the "usual weakness of a wife," who cannot endure, even a syllable, that does but seem to find fault with her good man.

You charge me not to *betray* you to your brother, but, my good girl, what room is there for any species of *treachery* between parties who have, in truth, nothing to hide, as they have no designs or sensations towards each other but those of reciprocal affection? However, to shew you that I am rather the loyal subject, than the abject slave, of my husband, I shall observe your injunction, and not impart to him your letter; though, believe me, all the effect it could have upon him would be (if that effect were possible) to increase his affection for you. Let me now assure you, most solemnly, that in the main object of your apprehension there is nothing to be feared from our dear indulgent Audley. To convince you of my perfect sincerity on this point, I will frankly say to you, that, if my good father stood in the post of my husband, as Cornelia's trustee, I should indeed be terrified for the destiny
of

of the *Lovers* ! aye *Lovers* ! my dear, I will not mince the matter : Lovers they are, as we well know, in reality, though not yet declared so in form. But though I question if ever nymph and swain were more passionately enamoured, or, in most points, more suited to each other ; if my good father, as I was saying, had the guardianship of the lady ; the rigorous spirit of his religion would attempt, I know, and I dare say with success, to annihilate the match. The piety of *my present*, and, I may say to you, my *better Lord* (though I really love my father), is made of much gentler, and more tolerant principles. From my parents I learnt all the practices of devotion ; but it is from your brother alone, my dear Lucy, that I have learnt, I think, the true essence of religion. What is there that I might not learn from him, except what his tenderness would sometimes wish to teach me, because he thinks, and I fear truly that I shall have occasion for it ? Alas, must I ever learn that bitterest of lessons, how to bear his loss !

But I am fallen imperceptibly, into a tender melancholy, ill-suited to the time, and very different from the strain in which I meant to fashion my instant reply to your affectionate letter. Happily for us both, here are objects just appearing in my sight to give a livelier turn to my thoughts : I can just discern the graceful figure of Cornelia, on horseback, at this moment approaching your favourite clump of trees. This will be called, to be sure, a friendly visit to me ; but, my dear dainty widow, I am not blind to
that

that solicitude with which you are now wishing to know if I have received a packet from Italy.

Well, that little scrupulous half-yielded and half-defended heart shall be speedily thrown into new palpitations. Audley has met her, and is walking home by her side. I must put away my paper for the present, my dear Lucy; but before I close it, you shall have, what I know you ardently wish to have, a full history of the impression which the long and touching narrative of Seymour may make on those to whom I now pant to impart it. Adieu for to-day.

LET me now re-echo to you your own lively words, "Read! read! and rejoice, my dear Lucy!" Trust me, the interest of your young and powerful client is strengthened as much as you can wish in the two awful courts of Love and Friendship. What would I give that you could have been an ocular witness of the various emotions produced both in Cornelia and your *not inflexible*, brother, by a recital of your enchanting dispatches from Genoa! That is a gratification we cannot have; but, as you are a dear good girl, and I am eager to banish all your painful timidity, I will give you, as well as I can, a brief and hasty sketch of the scene.

Suppose our first salutation over, and my lovely guest seated, with lips that dared not, in the presence of Audley, ask a single question concerning Seymour. I saw, and hastened to relieve, the inquietude of her heart, by saying to my two companions, "I have a great treat for you both; I have just received a delightful history from Genoa; and as I have barely had time to

skim

skim it imperfectly, we will secure ourselves from interruption, and my dear Audley will have the goodness to read it to us aloud." Cornelia gave me a look that seemed to say, "Oh, you barbarous creature, why would not you indulge me with it alone!" but joyous curiosity soon triumphed over her momentary displeasure. We prepared to listen with all our ears; and my good man entered with his usual cheerfulness on the pleasant task I assigned to him. He read with great spirit the honest exultation at the opening of the letter, and not without remarking the graceful modesty of Seymour. You will readily suppose, that I watched every instant the features of both my companions; their first expression was that of simple, unmixed joy, in the perfect success of this charitable embassy. As the history proceeded, new and various emotions arose and shewed themselves very visibly in the faces that I watched. I must not attempt to give you a very minute account of these, as they would render my letter more voluminous than Seymour's; but there were two or three striking incidents, in the course of this reading, that I must describe to you. When Audley came to this passage, "It is not, I am persuaded, in the power of nature to present any prospect to the eye so perfectly fascinating as the view of a lovely female heart under strong agitation," he fixed his arch eyes on our lovely guest, who, sensible of his meaning, turned instantly, not pale with terror, my dear, but *crimson, deep crimson*, with conscious love. Audley gave me a significant glance; and, to relieve our dear dis-

treft friend, began to read on, without farther pause. The description of the little Giannina paffing the old merchant's door made us all fmile; but when my dear devout husband read the following exclamation, "How sweet and innocent "are the illufions of affectionate piety!" he exclaimed, with an expreffion of countenance between a frown and a fmile, "Ah, Seymour, we muft somehow convince you, that true piety is fo far from being full of illufions as you fuppofe it, that it is the only thing which can feparate illufion from human joy." He added, with an air of cordial friendship, "if we can but teach you this fimple truth, we fhall very eafily make you one of the happieft, as you are certainly one of the moft amiable men in the world." Another full blufh, and a half figh, here efaped from Cornelia. Audley read on, very generously, without cafting his eyes towards her. When he came to Seymour's fudden languor, and affecting difcourfe to the old merchant before he would accept his cordial, Cornelia and I burft into tears that we tried in vain to check. Your brother, who is, you know, by nature ufed to the melting mood, foon completed the weeping party: he read and wept, and wept and read, till at laft, feizing the transported Cornelia by the hand, he exclaimed, "By heaven, my dear widow, it is impoffible not to love this bewitching Seymour! The rogue has melted me into a woman, and made me in love with him myfelf."

There, my dear Lucy, there's a charming fpecific for your fits of timidity. Now have I a great mind to throw down my pen, and leave
you

you to dwell on those comfortable words ; yet I will not be so cruel to you as to suppress one circumstance, which, as my dear Audley said to me when we were alone, displayed to him at once the native modesty of Cornelia, and her rooted passion for Seymour : when my husband read the words, " my adored Cornelia," she did not, as I maliciously expected, start suddenly or blush at the sound of her own name so tenderly introduced. In truth, she did not believe those words existed in the letter. Pray admire this diffidence in our lovely friend. As Audley had rallied her a little on her supposed affection, she concluded, in the simplicity of her heart, that he had sportively inserted this passage as a continuation of his raillery ; and she laughed at him, in her turn, for supposing her so credulous. On his protesting his veracity, and placing before her eye the identical words, " my adored Cornelia," written in fair and large characters, her tears fell instantaneously on the paper : I could not restrain myself from giving a voice to them, and exclaiming, in the words of the scarcely less simple, and certainly not more enamoured Miranda,

" I am a fool
" To weep at what I am glad of."

As soon as I had pronounced my wicked quotation, I was ready to bite my tongue off, for my poor friend was bitterly distressed, and cast upon me an eye of heart-wounding reproach ; but your brother, who is, you know, the most dexterous of beings in relieving the embarrassed,

soon put us into perfect good-humour with ourselves and each other.

In short, we are now all harmony and hope; take your full share of this joy, my good girl; and trust me, if you continue to send us *such dispatches* from your interesting client, you will have little reason to tremble for the final issue of his cause. I wish I was sure of seeing you married as well on the day that unites him to Cornelia. Do not insult these my good wishes, dear Lucy, with a toss of supercilious virginity; but, if you pretend to doubt of their wisdom, pray give me full credit for their kindness.—Accept our united love, and believe me ever,

Your most faithful

HARRIOT.

LETTER XXIV.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

WITH all your extensive speculation, my dear Philosopher, on human characters, you have never seen such a creature, I am persuaded, as Giuliana: and let me add, that although you have studied this beautiful *unique* in scenes of solitude and of sorrow, where you might imagine that all the finer mental folds

would

would unveil themselves to your observation, you are still unacquainted with half her perfections. I have heard many a woman called an angel—I have seen and heard many look angelically, and talk angelically—but I never beheld the absolute angel in female conduct till I saw Giuliana repairing all the various evil which past events have produced in the house and bosom of her father. How sublimely beautiful does a human creature appear, who, in the bloom of youth, and with every personal attraction, instead of being actuated by any selfish or perilous thought, or passion, has no design, no idea, no sensation, but what originates and centers in the good of those friends whose peace and happiness she seems commissioned to superintend, without any portion of their natural infirmities! In truth, Giuliana now appears to me so much the angel, that I should almost call it profaneness in any man to think of making her even a wife. She is—I do not mean to speak with any foolish jocularly, but in serious verity—she is too spiritual for such a department: all the warm and half-wanton blood; all the little amiable caprices which form, you know, the attractive essence of female character in a young modest woman; all these, that must have existed in the frame of Giuliana, seem to be refined into soul, into mere intellectual benevolence. The fact, I am persuaded, is that all her faculties, and sensations are absorbed in her sublime and eternal passion for Peverell; it is the ambition of her heart and spirit to be united to that dear idol in paradise; and her temperate enthusiasm persuades her, that she will most effectually

effectually accomplish this great object, by ministering to the temporal and to the coelestial interest of her father: whether she will succeed or not, in raising the old merchant to Heaven, I shall not presume to determine; but I may safely assert, that she has rescued him from that earthly Tartarus, an ill-assorted marriage. I have now passed eight very interesting and rapid days in their house; it is utterly beyond my power to describe to you the exquisite address, delicacy, and spirit, with which she has carried many important points in this period: I must content myself with giving you the result of her influence. In the first place, she has acquired, and exercised with sweet and becoming gentleness, that ascendancy and dominion over the impetuous old man, which a pure spirit has over a perverse one; she has disentangled him, in the most graceful manner, from his matrimonial perplexity; not by any abrupt opposition to the projected match, but by teaching him to marry, as our militia-men fight, by a substitute. It fortunately happened, that a young distant relation of Signor Pinelli was more enamoured than himself of this captivating and formidable widow. Giuliana, with inexpressible dexterity, persuaded her embarrassed father to become an advocate for the stronger and more seasonable passion of his young kinsman; and to toss a little of his own superfluous gold into the scale of his rival, which he wished to preponderate against himself. By this singular alliance, between Plutus and Cupid, the arduous affair has been happily settled, in a manner to accommodate all parties. I have still

to

to relate to you another delightful instance of Giuliana's conciliating address and disinterested magnanimity. She has negotiated and concluded a peace between some discordant branches of her father's family. She has even introduced into his house, as his adopted son, a very promising and accomplished young man, the child of his sister, who, having married to disoblige the high-spirited Pinelli, had experienced his resentment in such a degree, that he not only lived for many years without any intercourse with her connexions, but indignantly rejected her overtures of reconciliation on the death of her husband, an event that happened while Giuliana was in England. Such have been the domestic employments of our divine friend since her return; you will easily conceive how I worship her, and without any breach of my very different devotion to my no less adored, and still more attractive, Cornelia, who, even in these busy days, when I have been honourably employed as the confidant of age and youth, of the father and his child, has not unfrequently been a subject of our animated conversation. Giuliana, in the midst of arduous and intricate business, has the happy talent of attending, not only to her present, but even to her most distant friends. You and Lucy will receive, with this letter, several very pleasing proofs of her grateful remembrance. But you, as I have just told her, will join with me in reproving the sumptuous liberality of her gratitude. We have had a vehement contest in a point of delicacy and honour, in which she has subdued me completely both in words and actions.

actions. In truth, she invaded me on my weak side, and therefore obtained a more rapid and decisive victory. What think you she has insisted on doing? Would you believe that she has, in a great measure, taken from me the dear office of supplying the musical wants of my Cornelia? She will only allow me to send, on my own account, two favourite airs; while she usurps the prerogative of dispatching, as a present from herself to the lovely stranger, an exquisite selection of vocal music. I argued very furiously against the glaring impropriety, and I added the barbarity, of such a proceeding. But my more eloquent antagonist soon convinced my love, if not my reason, that the terms of reproach, which I applied to her design, were in truth only applicable to the opposition I made to it.

What a sublime creature she is!—how imperious in her humility!—She has written a letter to Cornelia. I would almost give one of my hands for a perusal of it; and yet (here is barbarity to which even her eloquence cannot reconcile me!) yet I am not permitted to read, or hear, a syllable of her epistle!—And I also must write to Cornelia—write to her for the first time. O delicious, dreadful task! how shall I accomplish it to my own satisfaction! to my own, I am persuaded, it will hardly be possible. I shall think, at every word I write, that I have said too little, or too much. How capricious are the human faculties! Now could I more easily scribble a volume to thee, Edmund, critical as thou art, on the most crabbed subject thou couldst propose

propose to me, than write ten easy elegant lines on a happy occasion to my candid Cornelia. It must, however, be done, and speedily too; so farewell, my dear Edmund. Tell Lucy I hope to bring her home a husband that she cannot object to, the new-adopted brother of Giuliana, the young Signor Morone. I have not time to send her a portrait of him at present: but I shall have sufficient opportunities to draw it; for he is to have a little establishment at Rome during the winter; and as I think it most eligible for me not to return to England till the spring, we are to keep house together, and to be honoured with a visit from the incomparable Giuliana and her *regenerated* father. O that you could escort Cornelia for me to some Roman temple of Connu-bial Juno! But all in due time. Once more farewell.

LETTER XXV.

FROM SEYMOUR TO CORNELIA.

DEAR MADAM,

I FIND that to take an interest in your amusements it is not necessary to have had the happiness of seeing you. I am almost ashamed to tell you, that a person who never enjoyed
 I 3 that

that happiness has robbed me in a great degree of the honour and the delight that I proposed to myself in executing your musical commission. The lady Giuliana, to whose very singular history and character you are no stranger, has so forcibly pleaded for the gratification of sending you such a collection of music as she thinks may be most agreeable to you, that I have been forced to suspend, but not to relinquish, my invaluable privilege of acting as your servant; as a little memorial of my duty, I take the liberty of adding to her judicious selection two favourite airs, peculiarly expressive of maternal tenderness. And happy indeed shall I think myself when I have the opportunity of hearing them from a certain voice, which has the power of giving new delicacy and grace to the purest and most graceful sentiments of nature! The language and music of this country are justly famous for speaking to the heart. I feel that they do so. Yet allow me to say, I am so true an Englishman, that, highly entertained as I have been at Genoa in hearing several of the Italian songs now travelling to you, I shall be much more delighted in hearing them from English lips.

I am constrained to pass a great part of the approaching winter at Rome; and although my expedition to this country was certainly an act of choice, and I have the greatest reason to exult in its success, yet I feel that in so long an absence from England I must experience the pains of exile. Permit me to say, that nothing can so effectually alleviate those pains as to be favoured
with

with a second commission from you, as a proof that you forgive my imperfect execution of the first.—Accept the most ardent good wishes of my heart to yourself and the two lovely dear little heroic boys, with whom I was vain enough to fancy myself a favourite.

Farewell; and let me live in the hope that you will soon bestow the consolatory honour I have requested on

Your most devoted servant.

L E T T E R XXVI.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO HENRY
SEYMOUR.

YOU are indeed, my dear Seymour, the very prince of ambassadors. No words can sufficiently express to you how much we rejoice in the success of your negotiation, and how much we are enchanted by the admirable dexterity and spirit with which you have accomplished the great object of your wishes; nor let me fail to praise and thank you as I ought, for the felicity and kindness of your description, which transports us to Genoa, and makes us absolutely your companions in every interesting scene. We cannot satiate ourselves with repeated perusals

sals of your delightful narrative ; and though we have twice read it regularly through together, Lucy and I are almost ready to quarrel for the separate sheets that each is eager to devour alone.

Tell the noble Signor and our divine Giuliana, that, separated as we are by the ocean, we see, we hear, we embrace you all every day ; and take a full share in those scenes of heart-felt delight, which have arisen so happily, my dear Seymour, from the admirable exertion of your talents and virtues. I see how ardently the grateful, the angelic Giuliana will wish you to be rewarded : I desire therefore that you will tell her, in a whisper, a piece of private intelligence, that I am sure will add very considerably to her present satisfaction—tell her, we have already a reward for you equal to her generous estimate of your merits ; yes, you happy and meritorious favourite of the fair, you will allow that I have not exaggerated the value of this reward when I bestowed it upon you *in a word*, and assure you, from indisputable authority, that your adored Cornelia *doats* upon her adorer. Nay, doubt it a little if you please ; so much the better ; lest the excess of your joy, conspiring with the native impetuosity of your spirit, should render you absolutely frantic ; yet it is an honest truth that my gratitude in the present hour could not withhold from you, though I confess my discretion, or, as you will call it, my timidity, suggested to me some reasons against indulging you completely with so important a secret.

I now behold you ready to ask me a thousand questions in a moment. Patience, dear ardent inamorato,

inamorato, you shall know all ; you shall be told, that the feeling, the frank, the generous Cornelia, has owned a passion for you to the friend of her bosom, the compassionate Harriot ; from whom the precious secret travelled, through your very zealous advocate Lucy, to me. To shew you how completely I command this pleasant channel of intelligence, I shall let you know that I have seen, and that I admire, your letter to Cornelia. You have ingeniously contrived to make violent love to her without saying a syllable on the subject. Indeed I greatly approve your caution and delicacy : I did not observe a word that Prudence herself in the weeds of a widow, could possibly carp at. Your unaffected Cornelia sent a copy of your letter to her confidante, with an honest confession of the delight she received from it : yet the dear dainty creature is resolved not to marry : no ; you are too wicked, magnanimous and engaging as you are ; and all other men are out of the question.

But seriously, my dearest Seymour, you must be very guarded in your behaviour ; her heart and soul are your own, if you will but avail yourself with prudence of the victory you have gained.

As I send you such intelligence as will, I know, occasion a wild ferment in your veins, let me cool them with a little icy admonition : First, I advise, nay, conjure you, to remain, as we wisely settled for you, the whole winter in Italy. Secondly, be cautious, I beseech you, in your conduct there. Beware of all the wild frolicks to which your runaway spirits are so apt
to

to betray you. Do not poison your blood by any gallant compliance with the wishes of an Italian princess; and pray, when you are at Rome, let not your flaming abhorrence of superstition excite you to kick the whole College of Cardinals out of the imperial city, or to sacrifice the poor Pope himself to the manes of your favourite Brutus.

It is hardly fair in me, recently and inexpressibly indebted as I am to your ardent virtues, thus to rally you for that impetuosity of spirit whose excesses I apprehend; but you will read my love in my fears, and my fears in my raillery.

I have yet a million of things to say; but I write at present in extreme haste, to seize an unexpected opportunity of sending this to you by a private conveyance. Perhaps my second letter may reach you before the first, which had nearly happened in the arrival of your two enchanting packets from Genoa, as they came to me within a few hours of each other. I would not begin writing to you in return, till I could tell you how graciously your delicate *love-letter* in *dumb shew* had been received by your dainty idol; because I knew that a letter which failed to tell you this must be of little or no value to so passionate a lover. Seriously, my dearest friend, you may hope and believe every thing you can wish in that quarter. Her heart, as I have said, is absolutely yours. My brother (as well as Lucy and Harriot) is warmly your friend. How can such a hero fail, supported by such confederates? In short, you have not an enemy to encounter. For Heaven's sake do not make one of yourself;

as that, I am persuaded, would be the only one we could not overcome. Still harping, you find, even in the midst of exultation, on the string of timidity. But how can I be perfectly free from apprehension, when I know your indiscretion on a certain article is almost as great as my anxiety for your happiness? Laugh, however, as much as you please at my timidity, if you will but cautiously adhere to the advice of

Your most grateful

and affectionate

EDMUND.

LETTER XXVII.

LUCY AUDLEY TO EDMUND.

Sedley Hall.

HERE I am, dear brother, as safely lodged in the noble and pleasant mansion of our Cornelia, as the prosperous Seymour is effectually lodged in her heart. There he is, believe me; and so perfectly has he made it his home, his house, his castle, that you cannot tap at the door without seeing him at the window. As
often

often as I have had opportunities to speak in private to my lovely hostess, the fascinating traveller has started up as the never-failing subject of our conversation; and more than once, after the good, tender, scrupulous creature, has desired, half-smiling and half-sighing, that we might talk of him no more, she has undesignedly introduced him herself. Ah, Love, Love, what havoc dost thou make in the memory, senses, judgment, and all the bodily particles, that form the composition of that poor weak creature called a woman! But, dear Mr. Philosopher, do not grow too proud in your solitude while you read this reflexion; for you know, by woeful experience, the case is not much better with you imperious lords of the creation. How often has your own magisterial reason, when guarded and graced by an orderly train of arguments and resolutions, like a set of important constables attending the Lord Mayor; how often, I say, has this masculine reason of yours, with all its retinue, been reduced to disappear, like a poor skulking magistrate in the tumults and conflagration of the metropolis! Yes, my dear lecturer in philosophy, this said love, whether licentious or chaste, is a terrible disturber of our peaceable faculties; and as I, by paying a heavy fine, am released, I hope, from all future chance of wearing his burthensome, tho' honourable chain, I find an agreeable exercise and amusement in trying to lighten the yoke of this tyrant for my friends of either sex. You have taught me to cherish the belief that I have done you great service, both by tender consolation and ludicrous

crous reproof ; I wish I may succeed as well in Cornelia's case, which is directly opposite to yours. You destroyed the peace of your life by having *no scruples*, and she is a little disposed to produce the same effect by indulging *too many* : alas ! if the rich, the wise, and the good, find it so very difficult to make themselves easy, how dismally restless must be the lives of the poor, the weak, and the wicked ! See what a moralizing creature you have made of a mere rattle, by your habits of contemplation. I have fallen, you find, already into grave reflexions, instead of giving you a lively description of this charming scenery, and the pleasant day that introduced me here ; but you shall have it all, as I am bound in gratitude to send you as long a letter as the dear solitary bachelor can wish to receive.

First, let me tell you, as you have not been here for some years, that this charming spot is a thousand times more beautiful than it was when we paid a visit together to our poor departed relation. Both the house and grounds, which used to exhibit somewhat of his austerity and gloom, appear to have caught the lively and tender graces of Cornelia : the old fashioned-square courts, and the never-ending series of stone-steps, that made the whole garden one over-grown stair-case, are all vanished ; and, instead of them, you see nothing but Nature embellished with true Arcadian simplicity. In short, the place itself appears to me as a beautiful widow, who has just got rid of an old burthen some husband, called *Formality* ; and is at
once

once enlivened and softened by a new lover, called *Taste*.

What a wicked and abominable simile is this! Heaven grant the ghost of my old cousin may not torment me for it! but it struck my fancy so forcibly, that I could not help throwing it into my letter, to make you smile in your solitude.

But to return to my own history: my brother and Harriot escorted me hither on Thursday, by their new private road, which really saves a circuit of about 17 miles; and, notwithstanding all that Harriot has repeatedly said in its praise, it surprized and delighted me beyond my expectation. In the first place, the road itself is contrived with a most happy attention to picturesque beauty; and, secondly, it exhibits a succession of the sweetest cottages that I ever beheld; half of these, you know, were built by Sedley, and half by my brother. And these two charitable landlords seem to have had an amicable contention which should produce the most pleasing and perfect specimens of rustic comfort, content, and cheerfulness. Every tenant of a cottage has a certain number of these private gates allotted to his care, with some territorial rights and privileges, for the maintenance of his family: the most deserving characters in humble life were selected for these stations; they all prosper, and all together compose a succession of scenes that pleased me even to tears; but you know I am an odd creature, and often weep where other folk would smile, and often laugh where they would be sad.

Harriot,

Harriot, who is, you know, such a rare good wife as to delight more in a tribute paid to the benevolence of her husband, than in any compliments to her own beauty or understanding, was gratified in the extreme, by the cordial admiration I expressed for this enchanting road, which I begged leave to christen by the name of *Jacob's Ladder*, as it seems to lead ultimately to Heaven, and its steps are covered with little cherubims. My dear conductors having safely lodged me in this mansion, which is, perhaps, as like Heaven in the purity and beneficence of its inhabitants as any human habitation can be, returned home again after dinner. The day was a pleasant one in all points, except in their speedy return. Our party at dinner was exactly to my fancy ; neither too large nor too small ; but most happily formed for agreeable conversation ; it consisted only of ourselves and two gentlemen, whom Seymour himself would think entitled to that name, in spite of his antipathy to their coats :

“ Their coats they were good, but alas, they were black.”

For our two gentlemen were the minister of the parish and a very pleasing visiter of his :

“ An Oxford sage, extremely read in Greek ;”

but as polite and gentle in his manners as if he had never heard a crabbed word in his life.

Cornelia has, I think, first-rate talents for conversation ; and she exerted them to our general

neral delight, not by engrossing a large portion of the discourse, but by her skill in bringing every voice to its proper share in the concert. It seldom answers to repeat conversation, however sprightly and amusing; yet I must tell you one remark that dropt from William, and made a forcible impression on my mind. The mild Mr. C. who often acts as almoner to the charitable Cornelia, was paying her some just and delicate compliments on her success in relieving some piteous objects of her bounty; and among them a poor woman, the wife of an honest labourer, who had, like her husband, been long remarkable for industry, chearfulness, and good-nature. But being betrayed by indisposition into dram-drinking, she grew by degrees so splenetic and malignant as to acquire in the neighbourhood the appellation of the *Crazy Woman*. In speaking of this unfortunate sufferer, my brother said, "I believe madness has often this origin: as benevolence and sobriety may be said to constitute, in great measure, the perfection of a rational being every deviation from either may be considered as an approach to insanity."

Whether this observation is philosophically and medically true or not, I shall leave you, my dear solitary philosopher, to consider; but it struck me forcibly in the moment I heard it, and has since been a subject of my meditations; you, my dear speculatist, are so severe as to think that no animals in the creation are so malevolent to their own species as woman to woman. Now, if your bitter idea has any foundation, we may at least set this malevolence in a pitiable, though

though in a very humiliating point of view, by ascribing it, with my brother William, to a want of vigour and soundness in the intellects of our sex. For my part I am determined to profit by the remark. I have resolved, henceforth, to say and to do all the good-natured things that I can to all woman-kind, for the sake of vindicating the health and dignity of the female understanding.

I shall begin my new system of benevolence with our lovely widow, by what my dear sarcastic Edmund will call a rare instance of female friendship : I mean, by persuading her to make herself happy. In serious truth, you may depend on my being as warm an advocate for your friend as you can wish me to be ; but how little does he want a new advocate, when Love and Music are at this moment stamping his image still deeper on the soft little heart, sufficiently prepared to receive and retain it ! Cornelia is delighted with the songs he has sent, and seems never so happy as when she is singing them. Her powerful notes have just ascended to the chamber where I am writing ; and, after so long a scrawl, I am sure you will allow me to throw down my pen abruptly, that I may hasten to catch more distinctly the sweet warbling of this amorous nightingale.

Will she continue to sing so delightfully if we put her, as we so eagerly wish to do, in a cage ? That is uncertain ; but this I know, that if she is not put in the cage I allude to, she will certainly sing, if she sings at all, with a thorn at her breast. Alas, poor bird ! I meant to close
with

with a little innocent laugh, and am half ready to cry. Pity the poor foolish Lucy; and believe me ever,

Your affectionate sister.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

WELL, my dear innamorato, one of your passionate prayers is compleatly accomplished. Never was my poor friend Peverell, living or dead, more vehemently idolized by the ardent Giuliana than you are by the timid, the tender, the melting, Cornelia! 'Tis so, by all the powers of Love, if I know any thing of woman's heart, which I have studied in truth with sufficient application more years than you have. Your good friend the penetrating and zealous Lucy has furnished me with a hundred proofs, which you would have patience, I suppose, to peruse, if they were set forth in a folio volume, notwithstanding your dislike to a book of that size; but as I presume you will give me credit without calling for such a mass of evidence, I shall only mention, at present, one test of her affection for you, that I am apprehensive you will think a little unpalatable, and

and I would willingly assist you to relish and digest it : She has resolved not to employ her own dear dainty fingers in writing any sort of answer to your ingenious love-letter. Here I see you stare and frown, and protest that it is impossible ! that she must write to you ! that common politeness requires it ! with a thousand other protestations full of surprize, disappointment, anger, spleen, and love. Alas, my dear friend, I fear this rotation of turbulent sentiments is a necessary tax, that all mortals must pay for their amorous delights, however licentious or legitimate, however gross or refined. I have just paid the galling tax myself ; and feel it so heavy, that I am almost on the point of relinquishing for ever what I can only hold by a tenure so tormenting ; a certain female, whose capricious love for me is a secret to all the world but you, has teized me, since your departure, beyond all description. How often has she led me to repeat those truly poetic and truly philosophical lines of Rowe, on the sex.

“ Each motion of their heart rises to fury ;
and Love in their weak bosoms is a rage as
terrible as hate, and as destructive.”

You will say, perhaps, of your more gentle
widow,

“ She disclaims
Strife, and her wrangling train of equal elements.”
“ Without one jarring atom was she form'd,
And gentleness and joy make up her being.”

It

It may be so, my good friend ; I confess she is of as soft and delicate a mould as I ever observed in a female : but she is a woman ; and as such she will infallibly try the patience of her lover, especially as she has one who can hardly reckon patience among the constitutional characteristics of his temper.

But to return to the point whence I have sadly digressed, her resolution not to write to you, and the reason why you should contemplate that resolution with more pleasure than chagrin : had she not loved you, most assuredly you would have had a letter from her ; for I think, as I know you do, that she ought *in courtesy* to write ; so she ought *in discretion* ; but the most sensible and accomplished women perpetually over-shoot their mark on this ground. Whenever they conceive a vehement affection, they never fail to betray themselves at an early period of it, by an excess of reserve. Cornelia, however, thinks she has a full excuse for not writing to you, in the opportunity she has of conveying her thanks to you, by her correspondence with the dear, though unseen, Giuliana. I own I would give something for a view of their singular and mysterious correspondence ; but even Lucy, who is treated with great confidence by your ingenuous though timid widow, is not permitted to see a line, and can only discover that Giuliana has spoke of you with that friendly enthusiasm which your signal services have deserved. Pray tell that divine woman, if she is really a woman, and not a being of a higher class, that I adore her more than ever, as I am sure you must, for this
bold,

l
a
c
l
v
f
v

b
j
w
a
te
a
ch

en
ev
re
fr
th

bold, yet delicate method, of expressing her gratitude to you. I consider their correspondence as a striking omen in your favour ; but what omens can a lover want to inspire him with courage, who has visible possession of the heart to which he aspires ?

I will only say, therefore, be confident, be cautious, and be happy.

I know your active spirit will fret now, because you have no commissions from your Dulcinea, or I should rather say your Dido, to employ you ; but I will take pity on you, so far as to tell you an article she wants, though I question if you can find it where you are ; she has a fancy for a beautiful and spirited, yet gentle white steed, with a full mane and tail ; in short, such a palfrey as Dido might have been proud to mount when she rode by the side of the Trojan Prince.

Now do not quit the hospitable roof of the noble Signor Pinelli ; do not give up your projected residence at Rome, to plunge into those wilds of Arabia where the most beautiful horses are to be found, and where a horse, as travellers tell us, is brought to practise the most spirited and the most gentle of human virtues, by being cherished as a friend, and caressed as a child.

I know your affectionate impetuosity is strong enough to lead you round the globe, to gratify even a whim of the woman you adore ; and I really should not be surprized to receive a letter from you dated Hejaz†. Remember, however, that the sarcastic monitor, who has said so much

† Famous for horses of the most noble breed.

to you against any precipitate addresses, has allowed you to commence your siege in due form on the first appearance of that grand season for all amorous and warlike operations, the spring ; so do not wander too far ; but, wherever you may rove, rest assured, that the interest of your heart will not be neglected in this country, and that you have a vigilant, zealous and faithful agent in

Your affectionate, &c.

P. S. I hope Giuliana has received a long letter from me, with the best return I could make for her splendid present. I should have said a great deal against the costliness of her kind remembrance, had not affection induced me to sacrifice my own pride to the indulgence of her imperial gratitude. She knows me well enough to be assured, that the strongest proof I can possibly give of my entire regard is, to accept, without murmuring, a gift of great value. She is, indeed, as I have told her, the only mortal existing who could exert such a despotic dominion over the most intractable of my feelings, and make me chearfully play the part of an Asiatic slave, bending under the weight, and yet smiling at the splendor, of unexpected and unmerited munificence.

L E T.

LETTER XXIX.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

NO, my dear Edmund, I write to you, not from Arabia, but from Rome. Here is your impetuous friend; but, alas, his impetuosity, like that of Rome, is no more. In truth, I am as much reduced in spirit, and as crest-fallen, as this poor old draggled-tail Queen of cities herself. I am as much mortified and as splenetic as one of her paralytic, yet ambitious, cardinals, who has just lost his animating prospect of the papal throne. Notwithstanding all the kind ingenuity of your friendship to soften my chagrin, I am wretched, under the uncivil and barbarous resolution of Cornelia not to answer my letter! Shall I frankly confess to you, how violently I was at first affected by her unexpected silence? it inflamed my pride almost to frenzy; and half-palsied my love. Had the divine Giuliana been accessible as a wife, I should, I believe, in the instant have united my destiny to hers; but I did not wound our exquisitely feeling and open-hearted friend by any such proposal; and this angelic creature has joined her efforts to yours, in trying to persuade me, that I ought to consider an insult as a proof of affection. Alas, my dear monitors, how fallacious

are your arguments ! do women hesitate to write, when their passions are awakened ? No, no ; to scribble when they really love, is the first delight of their souls ; it is their passion, even in infancy ; and their little fingers itch to scrawl a billet-doux before they can well hold a pen. No ; it is plain enough, her heart turns from me with abhorrence ; and for this I am indebted, I suppose, to some of her pious friends : but they, and she herself, shall feel, if I live, that I am not to be insulted with impunity ; they may make me, if they please, an object of their hatred ; but never of their contempt.

That you, my dear sober friend, may not think me too precipitate in my indignation, I must tell you, Giuliana has had a second letter from Cornelia ; and would not shew me a line of it, though I begged for the indulgence as if my very being depended on a perusal of that tormenting paper. The friendly angel has vainly tried both to argue and to laugh away my resentment ; promising, that, if I behave well, she will treat me with a whole paragraph from the next epistle : but I will not allow even her charitable virtue and her enchanting spirit to jest away my very just indignation ; and to act as a proxy for Cornelia, in making a fool of my heart.

How fully have I experienced, since I entered this city, the truth of Metastasio's maxim, that objects change their appearance according to the tranquility or the tempest in our hearts. When I paid my first visit to Rome, a very few years ago, with what ardour did I ascend to the capitol ! my pulse seemed to beat with Roman energy as
I surveyed

I surveyed the monuments of Roman magnificence ; and my soul caught fire in the recollection of those heroes whose virtues illuminated the scene around me : it is not so now ; these ruins and palaces, this strange mixture of debility and splendor, only feeds my spleen and increases my melancholy ; yet I am pleased to wander alone among shattered columns and broken arches, and find somewhat of soothing sympathy between grandeur in desolation and love in despair.

I am just returned from sauntering, and leaning, a gloomy reverie, against one of the three pillars that remain of the temple which that cold-blooded coward Augustus built to Jupiter Tonans, on his narrow escape from a deadly flash of lightning ; and so stormy were my thoughts in this station, that I almost wished to meet such a stroke of heavenly fire as the dastardly tyrant was so thankful for escaping.

Pray is it a proof of man's sociability, or of his selfishness, that when our own prospects are blasted, we lose our lively interest in those of others : the poor young Signor Morone, with whom I am quartered here in an excellent house, is, like other objects around me, not a little overshadowed by the present gloom of my spirit. I once talked, you know, of bringing him to England, as a husband for Lucy ; but pray tell her, with my kindest good wishes, I have relinquished the project, and she must provide for herself. Morone is indeed a good and sensible young man ; but he is as unfit to relish the wit and sprightliness of your sister, as I am

to enjoy, in my present humour, the various delights of Italy.

Our dear friends of Genoa will be with us in about three weeks ; and then, I hope, you will receive a more chearful packet from this mortified traveller, whose spleen, I fear, you will now think immoderate ; but whatever excesses it may rise to, be assured, my dear Edmund, it can never overwhelm that affection with which I am,

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER XXX.

EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

YOU want, indeed, my dear Seymour, a Mentor in your travels, to guard you against yourself—believe me, you have no other enemy ; and think me not too severe if I add, you cannot have a worse. I am seriously angry with you for being so barbarously unjust to the tender Cornelia, and so blind to your own advantages. I am almost angry enough to punish you with cruelty nearly equal to your own ; and to withhold from you a piece of news that may prove a sovereign remedy for your spleen. But, if I did, I believe your partizan Lucy would think

think that I deserved, like an ungrateful and inhuman tyrant, to be cut off by a dose of domestic poison. So, in pure self-defence, I must inform you, that your lovely opulent widow has been furiously attacked by a most formidable assailant; and has defended herself with infinite spirit, skill, and success. In plain English, that I may not torture your fiery imagination, let me tell you, her insinuating and splendid neighbour, the Peer, has exerted all his abilities to secure the possession of her hand; but with so little effect, that he has now abandoned the enterprise in absolute despair. There is a triumph for you, that you little deserved in your late fit of querulous ill-humour!

Now do not let your exultation be as unreasonable as your spleen; for she does not reserve herself for *you*; no, you wicked humorist, engaging and all accomplished as you are, you are not good enough, she says, for a husband; and as to all the other men in the world (mercy on us!) there is not any one that is merely tolerable: so, for her part (alas, the poor hapless creature!) she is devoted to eternal widowhood.

Aye, you happy rogue, how will you make all these petty ificles, that are so apt to hang on the retired and solitary heart of a truly delicate woman, melt at your approach in the spring! Indulge not, I beseech you, any splenetic humour; but dedicate all your feeling spirit to Hope and Love. If your active and imperious fancy can torture itself in your situation, what would it do in mine connected, as I am, with a
wayward

wayward bewitching creature, whom I can neither make happy nor relinquish, and who has the art of tormenting both herself and me, by an affection on which she might build, if she possessed a more steady understanding, the happiness of both? Yet, perversely circumstanced as I am, by the aid of a little optimistical philosophy, I make myself tolerably contented. I think every mortal should form for himself a sort of mental spying-glass, looking through the magnifying end at all the good in his destiny, and through the diminishing end at all the evil: but the greater part of mankind do exactly the reverse; and hence arises more than half the misery of human life. Hence the loud complaints, in every age of the world, against the general condition of our existence. Hence the innumerable invectives against woman, the source of our most exquisite delights. I have just had our friend Merton with me, for a few days, who is a thousand times more subject to spleen than you are; and, as he was also out of humour with his fair-one, he entertained me by inveighing against Love, with all the acrimony of a Cynic: "I think, said he, with that four vehemence which you can so well represent to yourself—I think Sir Isaac Newton was not only the wisest, but the happiest man that ever passed through the world; because he kept his mind always amused by science, and never allowed his heart to be tormented by a woman." I encountered our moody friend as a champion for the sex; and I replied, "Notwithstanding my respect and my passion for science, I can never suppose

suppose that the joys arising from intellectual pursuits are superior to those that belong to the affections. Do you imagine that Newton, in his sublimest discoveries, felt a transport equal to that of a lover, who, having doubted the fidelity of a woman he adores, finds her faithful and affectionate in the highest degree? Do you think that any author, in publishing a most consummate and celebrated production, can rejoice with an exultation so delicious as that of a father, in happily completing the education of a son? No, my friend, as Nature chose to make a warm heart her prime minister for the management of her most important concerns, she justly allotted to that minister the richest fund of delight."

You, I am sure, my dear Seymour, would have taken my side of the question; and who could have defended it so well, even in the field of friendship, without entering on that of love? who could more properly decide on the joys arising from our affections and our faculties, than a person to whom Nature has given so much warmth in the first, and so much quickness in the latter? Your adventures at Genoa would, in my opinion, determine the point; for assuredly no man of the keenest intellect could feel such exquisite pleasure in a supposed or real discovery of the longitude, as you felt in that happy scene which you so forcibly described to us.

Let the morose and the splenetic say what they please against human life, it is surely a field more productive of enjoyments than of sufferings, if cultivated by one who is careful to che-

rish the fruits and flowers, and eradicate the brambles and the weeds. It would be a Paradise indeed if we could all make, and constantly use, such a mental spying-glass as I have mentioned; yet, had I a patent for making such, I should hardly bestow one upon you; for in truth, you have only to see things exactly as they are, to be convinced that your lot is singularly fortunate; and I trust, the unaided optics of nature are sufficient to make you clearly perceive the recesses of my heart, and all the warmth and sincerity of

Your most obliged
and most affectionate friend.

P. S. Lucy is still with your lovely widow; and I should grievously lament her long absence, if I did not prefer your interest to my own comfort.—Adieu.

LETTER XXXI.

FROM HENRY SEYMOUR TO EDMUND
AUDLEY.

FEAR no more, my kind philosophical monitor, lest your too splenetic friend should torment and injure himself. Here is my good angel just arrived to enliven and protect me—here is our divine Giuliana, exerting her heavenly influence,

fluence, and diffusing peace and delight over every troubled spirit around her. She has fulfilled her promise, and indulged me, though in truth I hardly deserved it, with such a paragraph from the pen of my adored Cornelia, that all my proud suspicions, and surly inquietude of soul, are banished, I trust, for ever. Yes, my dear adept in the abstruse science of woman, your judgment in my favour is confirmed; I am convinced that the heart of this delicate widow is, as you have kindly told me, my own; for though she is too modest to make such a confession to Giuliana, yet every word in which she speaks of me is at once a graceful proof of her delicacy, and a most enchanting indication of her love. I feel this so strongly, that my angelic governess finds it expedient to admonish me not to let my expectations of happiness run too high. I believe, indeed, that I may now appear as much intoxicated with hope as I was lately exasperated by despair. Ah, my dear philosopher, what a restless scene of different tumults does the human bosom exhibit! yet who would wish to live in perfect exemption from the tender tumultuous passion? You and Lucy, perhaps, in the profundity of your philosophical meditations. But, if so, allow me to declare, that I am not of your sect; for my part, I embrace the doctrine of that charming female saint of Spain, the warm-hearted Teresa, who gave an incomparable definition of the Devil, in declaring him incapable of love. But seriously, my dear speculatist, it is this passion alone which can render human life to my feelings a scene that I would wish to prolong. I esteem
the

the joys of friendship very highly, yet I confess they are insufficient to maintain that harmony in my frame which is essential to its welfare. My feelings perhaps are singular and romantic in a great degree. I pretend not to say they are just what they ought to be; but I tell you very truly what they are. When I fancy myself not beloved, my whole frame appears to me as a heavy, awkward, and useless statue of black marble; but as soon as the rising beams of affection play upon it, the dark mass begins to be animated, like the famous statue of Memnon at the rise of the sun; every fibre seems to vibrate with harmony and joy. Such, my dear Edmund, are my own sensations in the present moment; yet I have certainly a striking example before me in our dear Giuliana, that it is possible for a being of exquisite sensibility to be contented (I may almost say happy) not only without possessing the enjoyments of love, but in the absolute persuasion of having relinquished them for ever: yet it is not so; for Love is still predominant in this lovely creature: her heart is with Peverell in Heaven; and all her very tender and very successful attention to her delighted father is only a method adopted by her love to ensure her re-union with the prime idol of her soul. She is happier, perhaps, in this idea, than she could have been with the living lord of her heart. There is a delicious and sublime tranquillity in a passion for the dead, that can perhaps belong to no other affection; at least this idea strikes me, when I contemplate the present seraphic serenity of Giuliana. Do not think, however, that I am desirous of consigning my lovely

Cornelia

Cornelia to the grave, for the sake of loving her with a more intense and more tranquil ardour. Enthusiast as I am, my extravagances are not so gloomy ; and I shall content myself with the hope of soon presenting to your contemplation two objects which I have heard your acute worship represent as the greatest rarities in the world ; I mean, love unabated by fruition, and friendship unimpaired by marriage.

I have just made a pleasant compact with Giuliana and her farther, who is metamorphosed by his divine daughter into one of the most gentle, generous, and engaging characters, that I ever met with : you know I have a particular veneration for those rare old men who preserve, with elegance of manners, a warmth and tenderness of heart in the latter stages of life. Pinelli has now all these endearing qualities ; for his two predominant failings, a love of money, and a passion for importance, are perfectly cured, by his conviction that opulence and rank are of little value to that angelic child of his, for whose sake he was once so solicitous to increase his consequence and his wealth. Giuliana has made him amiable and happy, by annihilating his avarice and ambition. His feelings are naturally strong ; he had no child but Giuliana ; he loved her intensely ; and that love, the main spring of his life, after being painfully counteracted by indignation and resentment, has at length recovered its force and freedom, and enlarged the circle of its activity. His past anger has given new energy to his present affection. He not only loves his daughter better than he ever did ; but he seems to love me almost as much

much as if I were really her brother, for having been, under Heaven and you, the fortunate instrument of her restoration to his parental arms. He flatters me on my talents, such as they are ; he rallies me on my foibles, and, in short, treats me exactly as a son very dear to him : but, in giving you this sketch of his regenerated character, I have forgot to tell you our compact.

It is briefly this : if I marry Cornelia (oh, that abominable *if* ! it chills my blood ; let me therefore say, *when* I marry Cornelia,) our friends of Genoa are bound to visit me in England, on the anniversary of my wedding, provided I can assure them, on my honour, that, in the course of the first half year, I have not experienced a single splenetic hour : if, on the contrary, I am reduced to confess,

“ That the rash humour which my mother gave me made me forgetful ; ”

I am bound, as a gentle penance for my offences, to conduct my lovely wife to the distant residence of our friends. To ensure the exact observance of this treaty, you, my dear Edmund, are appointed its guarantee. But do not hastily conclude that I shall certainly incur the penalty of this amicable bond ; no, I feel, by the magic influence which a few syllables from the pen of my Cornelia have already had on my bosom—I feel, that a single embrace of that dear tender being will banish every particle of spleen from my frame for ever ; and you will see the happiest of mortals,

mortals, and the most affectionate of friends,
in

Your faithful

SEYMOUR

L E T T E R XXXII.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

I Now write to you, my dear Edmund, not from Arabia, but from a spot which your sarcastic penetration could not foresee a chance of my visiting: behold me on the banks of the Tagus! aye, verily, in Lisbon! And now I hear you exclaim, "What, in the name of Heaven, could carry this strange eccentric fellow to Portugal!" Peace; you will be satisfied when I answer, Charity and Love. The first has induced me to assist a poor, a miserable, wandering, yet more than half-dead English invalid; whom I met in Italy, attended only by two helpless women. The second suggested to me, that, as the spring is approaching, I could not do better than move to a scene from whence I may be conveyed by an easy voyage to that dear object who is soon, I trust, to settle the tranquillity and happiness of my future days. At Rome I chanced to catch a sight of my poor old valetudinarian acquaintance Sir Charles Dawney, reduced, I think, to the
most

most deplorable sort of weakness that can fall on the mind and body of a feeble half-spirited mortal, and literally dying of a rage to live. His two good though ungraceful sisters, who will soon be repaid by his ample fortune for a long and wretched attendance on this selfish skeleton, have led him about, from place to place, just according to the whimsical dictates of his own querulous, mutable, sickly mind; which, instead of teaching him to expect and await the stroke of death like a man, makes him crawl about like a whining child, and foolishly seek, by the most uncomfortable peregrination through various countries, that health which no climate can possibly restore to him. For my own part, I confess his despicable and selfish avidity for life, burthensome as it is to himself and his relations, has annihilated my pity for his personal sufferings; and had I been one of his sisters I should, I believe, have been more eager to send him across the Styx, than to convey him to the banks of the Tagus: but these good women have an inexhaustible fund of affectionate compassion; they have charmed me by their indefatigable humanity; and when the eldest informed me of her wish, that she hardly knew how to accomplish, of indulging her emaciated brother in his anxious fancy to pass the month of March at Lisbon, I, like a true knight-errant as you know I am, immediately offered my services to escort them hither. A dismal piece of work I have had of it; but here we are; and I have been rewarded for my trouble, not by seeing the sick man revive, or expire, for he is neither better nor worse, but by meeting accidentally with
the

the very thing I wished to find for my Cornelia, a palfrey, whose beauties surpass every thing that I ever beheld in the shape of a horse; it is perfectly milk-white, with a mane and tail so full and brilliant that you might almost take them for threads of silver. I have only one thing to fear, that this exquisite animal may be rather too spirited for so gentle a rider as Cornelia; yet they assure me it has carried a lady, and the master of it swore to me it was the property of a Portuguese Dutchess lately deceased. This I take for a mere jockey's story. I have bought the horse, however, at a very high price, and moreover two very fine useful horses for myself and your old friend Robert, who is appointed for life my master of the horse. I have ordered a small vessel from Falmouth, to transport me and my cavalry to that port. I mean to proceed immediately to my divine Cornelia, with my four-footed offering; and, from Sedley-hall, I shall cross the country with all possible rapidity to you, and I hope to be the messenger of my own triumph. So pray tell my friend Lucy, if she hears your vigilant Hector bark furiously after midnight, she may dismiss her old apprehension of house-breakers, and conclude the alarm to arise only from the rapid and riotous return of

Your very sanguine, and
most affectionate,
SEYMOUR.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIII.

CORNELIA TO LUCY AUDLEY.

WE are apprehensive, my good tender-hearted girl, that you will be frightened out of your wits by the hasty letter dispatched to you in the alarm of yesterday, as I confess I was by the summons which brought me to the bedside of our dear Harriot, from whence I now write to you, not, I thank Heaven, to increase, but to relieve you from your terror.

She is sorely bruised, indeed, by the accident, and there is reason to apprehend an event which may deprive me of the opportunity I expected, of bestowing my fine Roman name, as you call it, on a little Miss Audley; but our invaluable friend has escaped miraculously, considering the horrid circumstances of her overturn. Poor Sally, who concluded her mistress absolutely killed at the first sight of her, desires me to say, she was hardly in her senses when she sent off her letter to you: and as to the honest postilion, his sufferings, I believe, are the worst of all; I do not mean in body, though he has his full share of bruises, but in mind; the good creature absolutely puts himself to the torture, for having been the innocent cause of mischief to "the best lady in the world," as he justly calls her.

Harriot

Harriot commissioned me, just now, to go and console him; and if you had been with me, we should have wept and laughed for an hour, at the odd unaccountable and tragi-comic expressions that poor Daniel made use of to discover how far he was likely to be the means of diminishing the expected family of his master. But I must not ramble from the main design of my letter, which is, to conjure you, in the name of Harriot and in my own, not to think of flying hither at a time that we know it would be so very inconvenient to you, especially as you have so very faithful and sympathetic a substitute in me, to take all possible care of your sister. She has determined, with her usual magnanimity, not to send Audley any circumstantial account of this mischance, lest his kind anxiety should hurry him back from Ireland before the business that carried him thither can be brought to a conclusion.

I have this moment had a private conference with our medical favourite Mr. Brensil. He is, you know, one of the most sensible soothing creatures in the world; and he assures me there is nothing to fear for the life of our dear patient, even if things take the worst turn they can; but, alas! she may have some sharp sufferings to undergo, and be some time confined. At present, though she is full of pain, she has all her usual spirits, and even her pleasantry; as you will find, by her first exclamation to-day, when I entered her chamber in a new-fashioned morning dress of white dimity, "So, my dear attendant, she cried, this, I suppose, is *à Genoeze*; and very

very becoming, I protest." Ah, Lucy! still harping on Genoa, you see—but I will positively throw down this abominable pen, lest it force me to say more than I intend of that bewitching city, which produces such admirable creatures as Giuliana; for as to any other person that Genoa may contain—you may think what you please, my dear, but I can assure you—no; you will only laugh at my protestations; so I will assure you nothing, but that I am, my dear Lucy,

Your very sincere

and affectionate friend,

CORNELIA.

P. S. I have not told you, that I arrived here late last night; and I have sent home for various necessaries to-day, intending to take up my abode in this house. I shall dedicate myself entirely to our dear Harriot; and as it is proper that she should be kept quiet, I have ordered my two dear little noisy chits to remain at home, under the government of their incomparable nurse. Pray make yourself perfectly easy, and confide in our sincerity and affection. Harriot is my partner in this petition; and begs me to add, that she will write to you very soon herself. Say every thing that is kind for us to your brother. Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

Sedley Hall.

YES, from Sedley-Hall, my dear Edmund, from a chamber adjoining to that of my adored Cornelia, I write to inform you of my arrival : 'tis well I do not write, as an honest Irishman promised to do, to tell you of my death ; for your knight-errant has had a narrow escape of closing his adventures like a true hero of romance, and literally pouring forth his life-blood before the gates of his fair-one. Behold me now in a state sufficiently romantic, just carried into her castle, in a very bloody condition, with a ball lodged in my shoulder.—I scrawl this billet to you in some haste, more pain, and still more delight, for I am charmed with the incident that has thrown me into my present state, though I must not yet attempt to give you any history of it ; I only lament that the blood I have lost was not shed in the defence of my dear widow herself, instead of an humbler beauty in her train ; but more of this as soon as I can write with more ease. As I cannot spare Robert, I send this off by an express, lest that rapid rogue Rumour, who runs and magnifies every thing, should get the start of my epistle, and distress you

you with a report that your friend is shot dead.— Be not in the least alarmed, I beseech you, my dear Edmund ; my life is perfectly secure ; my wound is this moment dressed by a very sensible pleasing fellow, who has not plagued me with a single hard word in the whole operation. He is *one of us*, an honest enthusiast ; and he is so taken with the satisfaction I expressed in my exploit, in spite of the blood it has cost me, that we are become excellent friends in a short acquaintance of half an hour. He is at this moment standing by me, to see that I fulfil my promise to him, of writing only a few lines ; for my animal spirits are in an odd sort of fluctuation, between energy and weakness ; and he insists, with the cordial warmth of a friend, that I remain perfectly idle and quiet for several hours ; so I bid you farewell, to fall into a delicious waking dream of my dear widow's return ; for she is unluckily from home, attending your sister Harriot on a confounded miscarriage ; but the dear tender creature will, I doubt not, return to-morrow, to visit the wounded champion of her castle, and repay a thousand fold all the bodily anguish of

Your smarting, but

fortunate and enraptured,

SEYMOUR.

P. S. Don't you remember a promise I made to you of my widow's very lovely luxuriant nurse ? She is the fair I have rescued from no vulgar ruffian. So you see, you lucky rogue, that I
have

have been fighting for you, as well as for my queen. My fingers burn to scribble the whole story to you; but I am bound, by a solemn promise, not to attempt it to-night. So God bless you!

LETTER XXXV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

IT is morning; I have slept little, but I can sleep no more; and as I can contrive to scribble to you as I recline in bed, without much increasing the pain of my wound, I shall begin to write, let my honest surgeon say what he pleases; I am sure his good sense will allow that, to render essential service to the body, we ought first to make the mind easy; and mine will not be so, till I have given you the history which I have promised; and which you, I know, will expect with the most affectionate impatience: so, fillets and bandages, by your leave.

I had a quick and pleasant passage, from Lisbon to Falmouth; landed my foreign steeds in excellent order, and, by a brisk march, arrived about five o'clock yesterday in sight of my lovely widow's park-pale; the faithful Robert, leading
the

the white palfrey, was a few miles behind me. My intention was to find quarters for the night at the little inn on the extremity of the heath, and to present both myself and the palfrey to my fair idol the next morning. I was meditating how to manage my introduction in the most decent and graceful manner, when just as I arrived at the first little private door leading from the park to the common, and nearest the house, a scene presented itself to me that I shall never forget as long as I exist: the first object I saw was the youngest of the little Sedleys, standing still, and roaring in an agony of infantine distress; just beyond him his brother, the little heroic William, trying, with all his might, to disengage a large stone from the earth; for what purpose, do you think? why, truly, to serve the noble little hero as offensive arms against an elderly but gigantic ruffian, who at that moment had got his beautiful nurse in his grasp, and was forcibly carrying her to a chaise that stood ready. You will suppose that I instantly joined the conflict, on the side of my most gallant little friend and confederate William, who had actually drawn blood from the stout and barbarous fellow that had seized his nurse, by throwing a sharp and heavy stone at his legs. I made my attack on the opposite quarter, and catching hold of his collar insisted on his releasing the woman. Being one of the most athletic men I ever saw, and frantic with various passions, he griped her fast in his left arm, and threw me from him with his right. He then asserted no very clear title to the beauty in question; swore the jilt, as he

he called her, had promised to marry him, and added another oath to announce a resolution of shooting any man who molested him in securing her person. In the mean time, the poor terrified female denied his assertions, called him some harsh names, which served to let me know my antagonist (he is a man of no trifling note, I assure you); and, with the most piercing supplication, implored me to persevere in her rescue. The girl does not want strength of body or mind; she struggled hard to escape; a general scuffle ensued, in which I was lucky enough to set her free, and to receive a large bullet through my breast into my shoulder.

What passed immediately after this I cannot very well tell you, as the force of the ball laid me flat on the field of battle; but nurse, who, as she honestly confesses, was not half so anxious for my life as she was to save her virginity for a man she loves; nurse, I say, informs me that the moment she felt herself out of the clutches of the lascivious old monster (you see by her expression women have no mercy on the amorous frenzy of an aged lover), she ran, without stopping till she got within the little door of the park, which, as the key was fortunately left on the inside, she was able to lock in an instant, and thus narrowly escaped her impetuous and frantic pursuer. Not thinking herself even then in perfect security, and seeing the game-keeper at a distance, whom the sound of the pistol had brought toward the scene of our adventure, the poor frightened girl continued running till she placed herself under the protection of his gun:

VOL. I.

L

with

with this guardian she had the humanity to return to my relief, or rather, I believe, in quest of the poor deserted children: how they supported their terrors, Heaven only knows; the first thing that I can recollect is the rattle of a post-chaise in my ears, and the dear little William creeping up upon me, rubbing my face, and crying out, "Seymour, Seymour, you an't dead! pray tell me, you an't dead!" I wish to Heaven I could give you a perfect idea of the wonderful spirit and affectionate endearing gestures of this brave little urchin: he will hardly quit me a moment; and the dear boy even petitioned to sleep in my chamber, for fear, he said, I should want his assistance in the night. O, my adored Cornelia, how lovely art thou, not only in thyself, but in thy offspring! Exquisite beings that ye are, when shall I have the transcendant happiness of saying you are all my own?

But to proceed in my history. When nurse arrived again at the gate, with her new and well-armed champion, the enemy was not only flying, but out of sight. Being foiled in his furious love, and dreading the chance, we suppose, of being stopped for an assassin, he had jumped into his post chaise, and driven off with the utmost rapidity. The rescued fair, thus effectually delivered from her fears, now exerted the most lively compassion and gratitude towards me. It was no easy matter to convey me to the house; for, besides my wound, which bled in a manner that terrified my two assistants, I had somehow got a sprain, which rendered me unable to walk. As ill luck would have it, the coach-

man

man and groom were out with their horses. What was to be done? Fortunately for me, the keeper recollected a little low garden-chair, in which his poor deceased master used to be drawn, by a servant, to his favourite spots in the park: in this I was soon seated; and the honest fellow, with my zealous friend William, who insisted on having his little hand in the business, drew me to the house. Faint and full of pain as I was, I could not help smiling at the figure I made in this triumphal car, followed by the beautiful and truly grateful damsel that I had rescued, who, carrying the youngest boy in her arms, walked close behind me, with the most touching solicitude for the ease and safety of her deliverer. I question if Alexander or Cæsar ever enjoyed a triumphant procession so cordially as I did; my vanity suggested to me, that this incident would render me the hero and the idol of this mansion. In truth, all the domestics of it seem as eager to do me honour and service as vanity itself can desire; a few hours will, I hope, convince me, that their divine mistress is as sensibly affected as they are by my adventure, and as eager to satisfy the ambition of my love.

But I have not yet told you all the events of last night. As soon as the men and horses came in (the rogues had been gallanting their sweethearts to a distant fair), one was dispatched for the nearest surgeon, and another sent to inform his mistress that she had a wounded knight in her castle. The last messenger fortunately met the surgeon, whom I described to you last night, a few miles from this house. He is a most agree-

able fellow, and, I believe, at this moment under this roof; for, being high in favour with Cornelia, and a continual agent to her extensive charity, he often sleeps here, I find, for the convenience of visiting the various poor patients of the neighbourhood whom she consigns to his care. It was his intention to do so last night, he said, before he heard of my accident. He is a very penetrating as well as a pleasant fellow, and has somehow or other picked up an idea that the lovely widow has honoured me with her affection. I intend to secure him very firmly in my interest; and, as I am situated at present, I may find him a very useful ally. He is a fine stout warm-hearted son of Æsculapius and Lucina, with a prolific little wife and multitudinous brood of children at home. But neither household cares, nor the wounds and maladies he has to cure, seem to rob him of his peaceful morning slumber; for, though he promised to visit me early, I have not yet heard him stirring.

You will begin to grow angry with me, for keeping you so long ignorant of the formidable ravisher, who was so near carrying off the luxuriant beauty that I once promised to send you, like a rich gift of ancient heroic times. Poor Edmund, your chance is gone! she is destined, I hope, to an humbler, yet, as your modesty will certainly confess, to a more meritorious lover, who has endured the most oppressive tyranny for her sake. But her history, if I can bring it to the conclusion that I have now set my heart on accomplishing, to make this lovely persecuted creature as happy as she ought to be, will form
a delicious

a delicious little romance, and you shall have it entire. I cannot however begin it at present; for here comes my sweet boy, my brave little William, my earliest visiter, to enquire after his wounded friend. I have indeed scribbled till I am weary; so adieu for some hours.

SEYMOUR in Continuation.

SHE is arrived! she has been in my chamber! she has been in my arms! I have folded her to my heart with all the impassioned pressure of Love, Hope, Supplication, Gratitude, and Rapture. Heavens, what a moment! I thought I was literally on the point of expiring with delight! Never did I touch in my life such a pair of lips! so ravishingly sweet! so transcendently voluptuous! Venus was a simpleton when she distilled her nectar upon them, for she must have made them ten times sweeter than her own. I could rave about them for hours. Giuliana, indeed, has a lovely mouth; but her lips, compared to my Cornelia's, are like a stony pear compared to a melting peach. Had only ten drops of blood been left in my shattered frame, they must, I think, have boiled in my veins at the unequivocal symptoms of this lovely creature's affection. Oh, Edmund, I never saw such expression before in the "female face divine." No language can describe the enchanting mixture of tenderness and of terror that her sweet impassioned features exhibited while I pressed her
to

to my bosom. But tenderness was the predominant sensation: her very heart and soul seemed to dissolve in a chaste angelic ecstasy, while I protested, with literal truth, that it is my ardent wish to die of my present wound in her service, if my life is not destined to be the source of her lasting happiness. The tear of gratitude and of sympathy swelled in her sweet eyes, and she suffered me to take such a kiss as would have overpaid the anguish of a hundred wounds: such a kiss!—You must not however prophanelly suppose, that the dear divine creature has been any ways deficient either in discretion or in delicacy; verily I think her conduct has been a model of both. But I tell the story vilely, and, from an eagerness to acquaint you with my felicity, I have jumped into the middle of my transports, without relating any of the little incidents that conducted me to them.

I will now endeavour to grow a little more sober in my narrative. Let me begin by informing you, that my lovely hostess arrived here about noon; and, after a gentle message, entered my chamber (for the wounds that I have received both from Mars and Cupid conspire to keep me in bed). Brensil, my surgeon, was her gentleman usher, and the dear brave little William her page. I would give any sum for an exact sketch of her angelic countenance, in the moment when her eye was first fixed on my poor pallid figure. No painter, I believe, could do full justice to so consummate a model of compassion, tenderness, and beauty. After a brief dialogue of concern and gratitude on her part, and
common

common gallantry on mine, I gave a significant glance to my sensible surgeon, whom I had seen before in the morning ; and he obligingly quitted my room, with a promise of a speedy return. In a few minutes I contrived to remove my little friend William on a trifling commission, and forcibly detained the lovely mother, who would have retreated with her son. I told her what perhaps was very true, that my life absolutely depended on her indulging me in a few moments of private conversation ; I had observed how deeply she was touched with pity at the first sight of me ; and as pity, we know, is a friend to love, I resolved to make the most of this very favourable first impression.

The moment we were alone I burst into the most explicit avowal of my passion. The dear blushing creature would have stopt me, by representing such a subject as peculiarly unfit for the time ; and conjured me to consult the re-establishment of my health, by banishing all ideas that could agitate my mind. I need not tell you my romantic reply to this friendly argument ; my incomparable Cornelia, who had been covered with a crimson confusion at the first declaration of my love, now began to display, not only great presence, but great dignity of mind ; and she addressed me in the following manner, with a composure and gentle firmness of spirit that struck me with new and awful admiration :
 “ Do not distress me, my very generous friend, by saying things to which I cannot possibly listen without a very painful degree of self-reproach. As you have just laid me under the greatest obligation,

gation, let your generosity abstain from every thing that can look like taking an advantage of my gratitude : believe me, I am anxious in the highest degree for the preservation of your valuable life, which you hazarded so nobly in the deliverance of a lovely woman, who, though her condition is humble, has a mind of a superior cast, and is endeared to me more as a friend than a domestic. Her history is singularly interesting : you have preserved her from the basest of injuries ; and her gratitude is so ardent, that, if she knew your present address to me, we should perhaps see her on her knees before me, to wrest from me a promise which you say is essential to your recovery. Solicitous as I am for your safety, and attached as I am to the grateful Caroline, it is possible that your joint entreaties might drive me to utter the words you require ; but reflect a moment, my gallant friend, what would your sensations be if you saw me embarrassed and made wretched by having hastily uttered a compassionate promise, which my whole soul was deliberately desirous of retracting." Here I exclaimed, "Oh, my divine Cornelia, you shall promise nothing ; you shall be free as air : yet love me ; for Heaven's sake, love me ; or do not barbarously endeavour to prolong my existence !" In saying this, I kissed her hand with the most tender vehemence, and, instead of withdrawing it from my passionate pressure, she thus continued her discourse : " Let not my great aversion to every thing that looks like prudery induce you, my good Seymour, to misinterpret my intentions : I should despise myself, if I attempted
to

to conceal from you that I am highly flattered by your partiality ; and that my heart is full of gratitude and esteem towards you. It is, I think, incumbent on every woman of real delicacy to avoid all appearances of coquettish duplicity, and fluctuating inclinations, with those who have any claim to her regard. For my own part, it is my wish to treat you with all the tender frankness of a sister ; but, in return for the openness with which I reveal to you the resolutions of my heart, I must expect you to acquiesce in my sincere desire. Wound me not, I conjure you, with farther solicitation, when I have told you, as I do with the most perfect truth, that I have seriously determined, for the sake of my children, never to think of marrying again."

You will readily suppose that I combated this idea with every argument that Reason, Nature, and Love, could suggest. In closing these various pleas I said, in a vehement peroration, "that if I obeyed her desire, and silently acquiesced in such a resolution, I should certainly deserve, and probably undergo, the bitterest of all punishments, the punishment of seeing her torn from me for ever by a bolder, more intelligent, and triumphant rival." I then painted so forcibly the frantic agonies that I should endure from such a spectacle, that I not only affected the dear tender creature, but absolutely threw my own frame into a convulsion of horror. She was touched and alarmed to a great degree : "For Heaven's sake, tranquillize your spirits, my dear Seymour !" cried the compassionate angel : think how cruel it would be to me, when

I am so very anxious for your recovery, to destroy yourself by the mere phantoms of your own impetuous imagination : I know it is very galling to a high spirit like yours, to meet even a shadow of ingratitude where it has conferred the greatest obligation ; but indeed you shall never find me ungrateful ; and, to convince you that I am not so, I will now propose something to you that may, I hope, restore you to quiet and to health. Will you promise me to calm your agitated spirits, and to drop this subject entirely till you are well, if I assure you on my word of honour, that you shall never see me united to any other man ?” “ Oh, my angelic Cornelia, I exclaimed, such an assurance, in this moment, would place my tortured spirit in paradise.” “ Then I give it you most solemnly,” the dear angel replied, extending her lovely hand towards me, upon the conditions I have named.”

Imagine to yourself, my dear Edmund, my inexpressible transport in this touching, this delicate proof of her affection. I threw around her the only arm I can use, and, pressing her to my heart, sealed our convention by that ecstatic kiss which I mentioned in the outset of my letter, that kiss upon whose sweetness I could yet write a folio, but of which the most eloquent of writers would be utterly unable to give you an adequate description.

When I had dwelt on her lips with the delightful avidity of a bee just settled on the richest of flowers, I released her from an embrace which, from various reasons, began to grow alarming ; and, to shew her with what punctilious

ous honour I would adhere to the terms of her charitable treaty, I began to talk on different, yet still interesting topics. First, the health of my good unfortunate friend your sister Harriot, which I have the pleasure to tell you is very nearly re-established. Secondly, the very curious adventures of my rescued virgin, the luxuriant, the grateful, the interesting Caroline. I long to tell you her story; but I must still reserve it for a future letter. I will not, however, close this without telling you a delightful touch of her gratitude to me, which I have this moment learnt from Brenfil. The intelligent creature, suspecting that I was half frantic with impatience for an opportunity to make love to Cornelia, very ingeniously contrived, not only to prevent the child's returning to me, but to engage Brenfil also in some professional business, that allowed me a much longer period for private conversation than I could have secured without her assistance. My sagacious surgeon, who has a most rapid eye in reading characters and motives of conduct, saw through the grateful girl's design, and made her very honestly confess it. He is a great favourite, I find, with all the women, and I fancy an admirable proficient in female cases. It is a rule with him, he tells me, to consider the heart as the prime fountain of health and sickness, in more senses than one; and he is very shy of giving medicine to his patients till he has somehow or other gained an insight into the state of their affections. If my dear widow should call for his medical assistance, I believe the rogue would be almost ready to pound me in his mortar, and
dispatch

dispatch me to her in the shape of a bolus ; so convinced is he that I am the only specific for any complaints to which her lovely frame can at present be subject. Having told you his system, I leave you to guess if I did not follow the precept of my Bible, and honour my physician with the honour due unto him. Pray observe, how religious I am growing ; but I must say, good-night ; for I can write no longer. Yet I have not told you, that my divine Cornelia indulged her children and me in a request we made, and graciously took part of a little repast with them in my chamber : after which she departed immediately, to resume the care of your sister ; but, in departing, she gave me such a deliciously tender *adieu*, that I could wish to do nothing but dream of it till I see her again. In that hope, I bid you once more, and for the last time, good-night.

I cannot throw down my pen, without entreating you to dismiss all the friendly anxiety that I know you and Lucy will feel concerning my wound. I am anxious lest it should be healed too soon, and oblige me to quit this mansion of bliss for too long an interval, before I can make the lovely mistress of it my own. Surely she cannot persist in the terrific resolution she mentioned. Ah, my blood curdles at the bare supposition. Pray, my dear Edmund, meditate on every expedient that you think likely to make her mine, and to accelerate an event so essential to the well-being of

Your most affectionate

SEYMOUR.

I break

I break the seal of this packet to say, that my express is just returned with your most friendly billet. I grieve that you are ill; and conjure you not to think of coming hither. I insist on paying you the first visit. Adieu.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

My dearest of Friends,

I AM so painfully surprized, by the kind account of your horrible adventure, that I hardly know what to do or to say. Had your messenger not found me confined by indisposition, I had infallibly hurried to you immediately; for I know your gallant spirit makes too light of every danger, and I am wretchedly apprehensive that your wound may be much more serious than you represent it. In the name of Love and Friendship, I conjure you not to trifle with a life so valuable. Consider, you are on the point of obtaining the fondest wish of your heart, and have before you as fair a prospect of your happiness as the world can exhibit. Do not, I entreat you, sacrifice all to any unseasonable contempt of danger; if your surgeon is in any degree alarmed by your case, I

con-

conjure you to send instantly to London for the best advice. I know that, if you are not already more than half dead, you will laugh abominably at my apprehensions; I allow you to do so; but the perpetual monitor must remind you, that your disdain of fear, which stands high among your numerous virtues, sometimes passes the line, and shews itself in the petty grouse of your foibles. Remember Pope's Lord Peterborough, the bravest man of his time, used to say, "Shew me real danger, and I will shew you real fear."

However, if you are really safe (and Heaven grant you may be so!) I will rejoice with you in the glorious opportunity that Fortune has so propitiously given you, of displaying your heroism in the eyes of your goddess: That she may soon reward you for your valour, as Thetis and other chaste goddesses rewarded their heroes of old, is the fervent prayer of

Your anxious and affectionate

EDMUND.

P. S. I have had a smart fever; but Lucy has almost nursed me into health again. She would be very happy to render the same good office to you; and we should very soon, I believe, set out together for that purpose, if we did not conclude, on a minute's reflection, that you might, for certain reasons, heartily wish us at a distance. Tell us frankly your feelings on this point; and, I beseech you, do not fail to give us full and speedy intelligence.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXVII.

MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

BLESS us all, my dear Lucy, what a hurly-burly of casualties, sickness, and sorrow, we have had among us! But, thank Heaven, our prospect is growing bright again in every quarter. —To begin with myself: You will, I know, rejoice to hear that I am once more on my legs; nor will it afflict you to be informed, that I am going to make a charitable use of the liberty I have just regained, and to attend our dear widow in her second visit to the brave wounded knight in her castle. There's spirit and enterprize for you, my dear romantic girl! there's a bleeding lover ready made by fortune for your pen to celebrate, just as your own fancy would make one, according to the true pattern of good old romance. If you are disposed to exercise your genius in painting impassioned scenes from the life, you must quit the pensive philosophical batchelor, and take your abode with us; for ours, you find, is the region of adventure. Well, 'tis a great blessing that we can now laugh at the wounds of our young champion, which threw us all at first into a terrible consternation. Edmund and you, I suppose, have had a full history from himself of all that befell him. He may have described to you the delightful visit of his lady hostess. Ah,
my

my dear Lucy, what a visit was that for the accomplishment of our wishes ! The whole business is done, my dear. You may begin to work the bridal shoes you talked of presenting to her. Would you believe it ? The dear scrupulous creature was alone with him for an hour in his chamber ! “ Dreadful indiscretion ! ” she exclaimed in confessing it. “ Mercy upon us, cried I, ’tis well this tremendous hero had one arm disabled.” But her gentle frank heart was so open in its confessions, she came back to me with an agitated bosom, so full of pity, gratitude, and of love, that I could not bear to rally her long. Besides, I was, I confess, very impatient to know, as you will be if you do not know it already, what matrimonial advances our hero had made in so favourable an interview ; and what concessions he had obtained from our lovely scrupulous friend : no trifling one, I can assure you ; she has promised him never to marry another man. The lover has who induced his mistress to give up for him all the rest of his sex, must be a weak pleader indeed if he does not proceed a little farther in his argument, and at last prevail on the fair-one to make him a present of herself.

You and I, my dear Lucy, may now, I think, set our hearts at rest on this match ; it is a favourite point with both of us, and a point that Fortune seems as eager to accomplish as we are. I expect my dear Audley at home again in a few days, I need not tell you with what affectionate impatience. My father, who had heard of my late accident, is coming with him. It gives me particular delight, that I shall present your favourite Seymour to them both with such an accumulation

mulation of honour on his head. He has not only endeared himself to us women by his courage in this adventure; but he is just now very generously exerting his interest to redress all the wrongs of poor Caroline's persecuted lover. Could you have thought that the old Admiral would have shewn himself such a frantic brute? What horrid imperious creatures men are apt to be! Because this rough veteran has shed his blood very freely, they say, in the service of his country, he thought himself entitled to make as free as he pleased with the chastity of her daughters; but his outrage to Caroline is rendered doubly detestable by his base oppression of his young favoured rival, who, however inferior to him in rank, is certainly, from what I have learned of his sufferings, more truly brave than himself. If Seymour can accomplish his generous project of uniting this very handsome and cruelly injured couple, he may, I think, command the service of all honest lovers throughout the world. As to poor Caroline, who is, you know, a sweet grateful creature, she, I find, perfectly worships him already. So, if Cornelia should affect to be inexorably cruel, which is not, I think, very probable, she must be driven into wedlock by a general persecution from her own sex; in which I know the voice of the dear zealous Lucy will be as loud as that of

Her affectionate

HARRIOT.

L E T T E R S

LETTER XXXVIII.

SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

AS I think an interesting love-story no bad medicine, my dear Edmund, to inspirit the imagination of a sick philosopher, and as I have nothing new to tell you in the progress of my own passion; I devote this paper to the promised account of my humble, yet lovely ward, the very grateful Caroline. I heartily wish you could have the high pleasure that I have had, I mean, the pleasure of hearing this little story most admirably told by the eloquent lips of thankful simplicity. But, as I have laid you under an injunction not to hasten to the house where Caroline is to be heard, I shall exercise as well as I can, for your amusement, the agreeable office of her historian; if I may trust my own feelings in listening to her narrative, the adventures of few beauties are more worthy of being recorded.

I hardly know where to begin my history; because I imagine that your lively intelligent sister, who never lets an interesting tender story escape her, must have heard from Cornelia, and probably communicated to you, many particulars relating to this captivating girl; yet as that may not be the case, I shall briefly tell you the first incidents

incidents of her singular life. Caroline Southcote is the daughter of an honest and jovial farmer, who, living with more hospitality than discretion, left a widow, embarrassed in circumstances, and over-burthened with a numerous family. It happened that the squire of their parish had a brother settled abroad, as a consul in Spain, who, marrying a Spanish lady, requested his brother to send him over a young English girl, to attend on his wife. The lot fell on Caroline, whose merit and situation out-weighed her want of age and experience: she was a mere child when she was sent into this foreign service, but a very few years converted her into such a woman as might inflame to madness the warm blood of a Spanish Cavalier. She escaped, however, the gallantry of Spain, to be more roughly, and I hope in time more tenderly, handled by a British tar; for the two objects of her abhorrence and her idolatry are sailors. Just as she reached the delightful age of nineteen, in the full bloom of beauty by its nature luxuriant, and rendered still so perhaps, by the climate in which it expanded; at this critical season of her life, the master of Caroline was obliged by ill health to revisit his native country. His amiable Spanish wife embarked with him, attended by the lovely girl, whom, as the good lady had produced no children, she ever treated more as her child than her servant. They sailed from Gibraltar in an English man of war, commanded by an Admiral, whose name is well known to you, as he has often signalized his courage in the public service. This warrior, though he is, like Othello, declined into the vale
of

of years, retains, like the Moor, all his keen appetite for beauty ; and, I may add, for revenge. He was deeply enamoured at the first sight of Caroline ; and never, I must say, was a composition moulded by nature more likely to set a veteran on fire. The Admiral exerted all the advantages of his situation, in trying to gratify his desire ; but he found that the lovely girl was impregnable ; and having never perhaps met with a repulse before either in Love or War, he began to speculate on the latent cause of this unusual and unpleasant event. The searching eye of authority and suspicion soon discovered the source of this mortifying failure : the tender and open heart of the tempting damsel was pre-occupied by a younger assailant ; she had entered the vessel with a bosom well prepared by nature for all the ardour and firmness of genuine and honourable love ; and chance recommended to her favour a fine young fellow, who has proved himself, I think, completely worthy of her passionate attachment ; but, unfortunately for all parties, this favoured youth is peculiarly dependent on his old and ungenerous rival. He is a brave lad, of humble birth, but with the advantage of having received a tolerable, though cheap, education in one of the northern counties ; his friends had placed him under the patronage of the Admiral, who had freely promised, and had sincerely intended, to make his fortune. He had only rated him as a common sailor in his ship, but constantly employed him as his secretary ; an office he executed with great intelligence, and in which he had not lost opportunities of signalizing his courage. By his sense,
 spirit,

spirit, and affectionate alacrity, he had made himself the prime favourite of the Admiral. In a post so exposed to envy and ill-will, the engaging manners of Edward Monson still rendered him universally beloved; so far was he from being deemed unworthy of the high favour he possessed, that many persons thought him entitled to superior rank, and supposed, but erroneously, from his having the graceful air of a gentleman and an officer, that he was the natural son of his patron. In the eyes of the tender and discerning Caroline, he seemed worthy of the highest distinction; and she soon gave him, what he probably thought superior to all naval honours, the full possession of her virgin heart. The most exquisite enjoyments are generally loaded with immoderate taxes, and Destiny mingled for poor Monson a cup of honey and gall. As soon as the mortified old Admiral discovered the amorous triumph of his secretary, all his splenetic soul was possessed by the demons of jealousy, hatred, and revenge: he was converted at once from a generous patron, into a merciless tyrant, and implacable persecutor. His station gave him every advantage against his defenceless young rival that a base passion could wish, and he exerted these advantages with a mean ferocity disgraceful to human nature. Under frivolous or false pretences, he condemned the once-favoured Monson, now the object of his abhorrence and his envy, to corporal punishment and rigorous confinement. The tender Caroline, in reaching her native land, where she had fondly promised herself the full enjoyment of liberty and love, was reduced to the misery of leaving the
man

man she adored secluded from her sight, and suffering that ruthless oppression which his attachment to her had occasioned.

I never was more affected in my life than by the touching description which the charming girl gave me of her extreme agony in quitting the ship where her lover was imprisoned. She was obliged to follow the fortunes of her sick master and her foreign mistress; they both died within a twelve-month from the time of their reaching England; and a providential series of incidents threw the desolate Caroline into the service, or I should rather say under the protection, of my tender-hearted Cornelia. The cruel and furious old Admiral has had, in the mean time, the infernal gratification of persecuting his helpless rival during a long and distant cruize, from which he is lately returned. Poor Monson still continues his slave and his captive: but I have already taken some measures to restore the brave lad to freedom; and I hope soon to enliven you with an account of their success. I can only add to this letter a few more particulars that relate to this interesting girl. Upon my asking her, if her persecuted lover did not contrive to write to her after she landed; "O yes," she replied with an impassioned simplicity, "nothing but his precious letters could have kept me alive; and he has a faithful friend in a young lieutenant of his ship, who was so good as to send me his letters by every possible opportunity." "May I, my good Caroline," said I in return, "may I without impertinence ask to see one love-letter from this brave injured lad, whom you have taught me to esteem? and will you have the
goodness

goodness to shew me the very letter (I will ask only for one) which you perused with most pleasure?" "Dear Sir," replied the grateful Caroline, "after all you have done and suffered to save me from that barbarous old ruffian, I should be a thankless wretch indeed to refuse you such a request." At these words she slipped her finger and thumb within the folds of a thick muslin handkerchief, and pulled from her bosom a neat little case of blue tawin, which was suspended from her neck, by a very narrow ribband of the same colour. "Here," said she with a deep sigh, "here is one letter of my poor Edward, that I think it my duty to wear upon my heart both by day and night; that I may retain the fuller sense of all his sufferings for me, and constantly pray to God to bless me with the opportunity of making him all the amends that fidelity and affection can make. You may read this, Sir, she continued; but I should tell you, the old barbarian only kept him in close confinement while my master and mistress were on board his ship; but, after we landed, he was wicked enough to have him inhumanly whipt before the mast. You will see how bravely he bore it," she added, dropping a tear as she entrusted the letter on my hand.

I received with eagerness this highly valued epistle, which had been unfolded so often that it was almost in pieces. Poor Edward is, in my opinion, much more of a true hero than his base commander.

The brave fellow's letter pleased me so much, that I could not help perusing it several times; and I will try if I cannot give you from memory
a literal

a literal copy of it. I believe it runs exactly thus :

‘ My sweet Cary,

‘ I Had rather you should hear from my own
‘ hand than from any other quarter, that I have
‘ just endured the basest outrage that man can
‘ undergo from the old jealous and revengeful
‘ tyrant. How would your soft heart have
‘ shrunk within your bosom, in hearing the lashes
‘ that have mangled the body of your beloved
‘ Edward! I thank the brute, however, for ab-
‘ staining from this iniquity while you were on
‘ board; for now my sufferings are nothing in
‘ comparison of what I should have then felt for
‘ you. I have smarted indeed, and my flesh still
‘ trembles with pain; but my heart triumphs in
‘ the cause of my punishment; for, in truth, I
‘ am guilty of no crime but my love to you;
‘ and this is more increased than subdued by
‘ what I endure. I almost pity the vain fury of
‘ the old mortified inquisitor, for not perceiving
‘ that every lash which he inflicts on my body
‘ carries with it a delightful assurance to my soul,
‘ that he is detested, and that I am beloved, by
‘ the loveliest woman in the world. Oh, my ge-
‘ nerous, my adored Caroline, I am convinced
‘ that the wrongs I suffer will increase your attach-
‘ ment to me, and I therefore esteem them as an
‘ invaluable blessing. Fear not my fainting un-
‘ der oppression, because my fortitude is support-
‘ ed by my confidence in your fidelity, your
‘ purity, my angelic girl; and my patience will,
‘ I am

‘ I am sure, continue to foil the base passions of
 ‘ our persecutor ; and may deride the impotence
 ‘ both of his lust and his revenge.

‘ Write to me immediately, I conjure you,
 ‘ under cover to that generous friend who delivered
 ‘ to me your inestimable billet on the day you
 ‘ landed ; it was that blessed billet which inspired
 ‘ me with all the patient fortitude my injuries
 ‘ have required : write to me, my dear girl ; for
 ‘ your letters will be the most soothing of medicines
 ‘ to this raw and smarting body ; they will
 ‘ at least banish every sense of pain from the heart
 ‘ and soul of

‘ Your most faithful

EDWARD.’

There’s tenderness and heroism for you in a lad of humble birth ! The beautiful Caroline perfectly understands the real value of such a lover. If I can be fortunate enough, as I hope I may, to redress their grievances, and unite this handsome deserving couple, what a charming scene of exultation we shall have ! I have written to the Admiral, who, though he has long been under the malignant influence of two frantic passions, has the credit of having done several brave and generous things in his life. I never chanced to meet with him before ; but I have heard he was intimate with my father when they were both young men ; this circumstance tempted me to write to him. I expect his reply with singular impatience : when it arrives, you shall see both the letters. If his answer does not satisfy me, I have resolved to make a vehement application to the Board of Admiralty,

as I have a friend among them who will, I know, be ready to assist me in rescuing this brave injured lad from such malevolent oppression. Adieu. With me success in all the multitudinous concerns of Love that I have now on my hands. And believe me, with every kind wish to you and Lucy,
Your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

P. S. You will be no longer anxious concerning my wound, when I inform you that I have almost quarrelled with my surgeon for not giving it a more formidable appearance. The saucy pleasant fellow replied, that I have no occasion to descend to the artifice of a beggar, and attempt by fictitious maladies to work on the tenderness of the widow. I command, he says, without the aid of sickness, all the compassionate movements of her heart.—Agreeable flattery!

LETTER XXXIX.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

Sedley-hall.

JOY! Joy! my dear Lucy! let me pour into your sympathetic bosom some portion of that overflowing joy in which every creature of
this

this seems to be almost overwhelmed. How frequently and fervently do I wish you were with us, that you might completely share the tender jubilee that now reigns in this mansion, where every wall seems to re-echo the triumphant sounds.

“None but the brave deserve the fair !”

Let not your quick imagination, however, conclude from this burthen of our song, that your friend Seymour is married to Cornelia. The sprightly words of Dryden are certainly applicable to them ; but at present they are applied more directly to a happy pair of inferior station, in whose transports you will take an interest as lively as I do, and the more so as their happiness is the noble work of Seymour. How you would have wept with delight, my good tender-hearted girl, had you seen what we have seen !

But I will give you a brief history of the last delightful three days. On Tuesday I was made happy by the return of my dear Audley, accompanied by my father, both in high health and spirits : my joy at the sight of them was increased not a little by the affectionate encomiums which they both bestowed on my conduct during the absence of my lord. As he, you know, is always peculiarly alert in the service of his friends, he resolved to set out the next morning on a visit to the wounded Seymour ; and, after a little gentle raillery on our tender widow, he settled it for us all to remove to her mansion,

and thus assist her, with due decorum, in paying those attentions to the champion of her castle, which she certainly wishes to pay. I thought I discovered that the dear dainty creature was half-pleased and half-embarrassed by the first sound of this project; but she acceded to it very cordially. We all arrived here yesterday about noon, and had the comfort of finding our wounded hero just in that state which renders him peculiarly interesting, without giving us any alarm for his life. As he was not permitted to dine with us, our little party, at the request of my good Audley, paid him the compliment of drinking tea with him in his own apartment. What a zest does a little mixture of pity give both to love and to friendship! I confess, for my own part, that I never thought this agreeable fellow half so engaging as in his present pallid condition; and as to our poor Cornelia, she had such inexpressible tenderness in her countenance, while she listened to the various history which our hero gave us of his adventures, that I conceive the soft widow of Carthage to have been an absolute flint to her. In serious truth, my dear girl, we were all charmed with our evening; and Seymour related the late interesting occurrences, in which he has had so important a part, with such spirit, grace, and even modesty, that we could all, I believe, have listened to him with pleasure during the whole course of the night, had not some traces of the invalid in his countenance, and at last in his voice, given us a signal to retire.

You

You will guess how happy I was in this evening, when I tell you that my father, whom I was, you know, particularly anxious to prepossess in his favour, declared, after we had quitted his room, that Seymour exceeded all that I had said in his praise, and is the most captivating young man that he ever beheld. You, my dear Lucy, are not inclined to contradict this encomium; but, if you were so, you would still, I believe, subscribe to it, after hearing the account that I have yet to give you of this morning, the period of our highest delight and exultation.

As my father had not seen the late improvements in this charming spot, he and Audley breakfasted very early together, and immediately after it sallied forth for a long ride. Cornelia, under the guard of your humble servant and her eldest son, ventured to place her breakfast-table in the apartment of the wounded knight, who had petitioned most eagerly for this indulgence. In a few minutes after the tea-things were sent out, and while Seymour was ingeniously holding us his captives, as it were, by a fascinating description of some incidents at Genoa, and the filial virtues of Giuliana, we were surprised by the hasty entrance of Caroline. She appeared with a wild April face, full of smiles and tears; and, instead of apologizing for her intrusion, exclaimed, "Here he is, Sir, and cannot rest without the liberty of blessing our noble deliverer!" As she uttered these words, a fine martial young figure advanced, and throwing himself instantly on one knee, by the side of the bed at
whose

whose feet Cornelia and I were standing, he seized and kissed the hand of Seymour ; but, in attempting to speak, burst into tears, " My brave Monson, cried Seymour with a joyful quickness, you are of all men living the man I most wished to see ; but do I see you perfectly free ? have you got your discharge ? " The stranger could not reply ; but continued to kneel, and press the hand he held in an agony of gratitude. " Rise, rise, my good friend," said Seymour, who began to be much affected ; " you over rate my little services." " Good heaven ! cried the lover of Caroline, starting up, is it possible for any human being to owe more to another than I owe to you ? No, Sir, my whole life, devoted to your service, could not thank you sufficiently ! To you alone I am indebted for my liberty, and a blessing far dearer than liberty itself : I am indebted to you for the preservation of this lovely, this faithful, this unseducible woman." At these words he folded Caroline to his heart, who, instead of being rendered bashful by our presence, returned his embrace with all the tender dignity of innocence in paradise. Surely there is no sight more touching and pathetic than the meeting of two such meritorious beings, long separated by persecution, and suddenly elevated to supreme felicity in being restored to each other. The scene melted us all into silent tears ; and Seymour wept as plentifully as your humble servant, or even the more tender-hearted Cornelia herself ; but he made the first effort to subdue his emotion, and said with a pleasant vivacity to Monson, " Well,

“ Well, my good friend, since the old Admiral has behaved handsomely at last, we will forgive him for all the pain he has made us undergo : he is a gallant fellow ; and it is no little proof of his heroism, let me tell you, that he has spirit enough to send such a fine lad as you are to the beautiful girl whom he would willingly give his whole fortune to possess. But what said he to my letter ? ” “ O, I ask your pardon, said the happy bewildered Monson, here is his answer. ” He now delivered an epistle to Seymour, which Cornelia and I confessed a most ardent curiosity to peruse ; but our hero, who had, I suppose, some private reasons for not gratifying our visible wishes on this point, soon gave us a much higher gratification, by shewing us what his princely spirit had for some time projected, to complete the happiness of this interesting couple. Desiring Cornelia to give him his pocket-book, which had been laid on the mantle-piece, he said, as he opened it, “ My dear Monson, though your grateful spirit thinks itself highly obliged to me, yet in fact, if my zeal to serve you stopt here, I may have done you, perhaps, more harm than good ; for, by obtaining your discharge, I have certainly taken you from a noble profession, and left you without the means of subsistence : it is a duty that I owe both to you and to our country, whom I have robbed of a gallant sailor, to provide for you in some other line, and render you a useful and happy member of society. I am perfectly acquainted with your circumstances, and your resolution to marry the truly deserving Caroline

as soon as fortune enables you to do so. Passion and prudence conspire, for once, to second your wishes. I think, in point of discretion, you cannot marry too soon ; not so much to secure your bride, whose fidelity neither fraud nor force can subdue, but to prevent this odd furious old man, whose peace and honour we would both wish to consult, from relapsing into his amorous frenzy. Let me advise you, therefore, as a friend, to marry immediately ; and, that my advice may not appear more an insult than a kindness, you must allow me to furnish you with this immediate provision, till we can find an opportunity of settling you in some eligible employment."

After this friendly and delicate address to prepare the young stranger for what might oppress him, Seymour gave him a paper : and what think you, my dear Lucy, it contained ? You will hardly guess, though you, I believe, were the first, my dear girl, who distinguished our hero by the title of *the princely Seymour*. Not to put your curiosity on the rack, I will instantly tell you, it was a draft for a thousand pounds. I shall never forget the face of Monson in the moment he perceived its value. Astonishment, gratitude, pain, and even indignation, were all visible in his features. " No, Sir, exclaimed the high-spirited youth, though I adore you for your generosity, I must not receive it. I will appeal to these excellent ladies, if I should not render myself utterly unworthy of those invaluable benefits you have already conferred upon me, if I accepted such an immense pecuniary obligation

obligation from any man, without the shadow of deserving it." At these words he held the paper towards me. You will guess that I caught it with no little eagerness ; and he added, with a supplicating and distressed countenance, " Teach me, dear madam, how I ought to behave towards so noble, so disinterested a friend." " You are quite mistaken, my good Monson," cried Seymour, " I am so far from being a disinterested friend to you, that in this business I am the most interested being imaginable. I will convince you, in a moment, that you will confer a much higher obligation upon me by accepting this sum, that I can upon you in bestowing it. I wish you well indeed on your own account ; but I most honestly confess to you, that I have another, and a much stronger motive, for supplying you with this immediate provision : it is to gratify this lady, whose kind heart is deeply interested in the settlement of Caroline ; and, by yielding to me an opportunity of pleasing her, you will confer an obligation upon me beyond the extent of my whole fortune ; and my fortune, in truth, is such, that I shall not feel the slightest inconvenience in parting with a sum, which, by being applied to your immediate use, may make us all happy." While Seymour was saying this, he pointed to Cornelia, whom Monson had hardly observed before ; but he now looked in her face with an arch, yet modest, smile. That lovely face was covered with one of the deepest blushes that I ever beheld. On perceiving this, I said to Caroline, who had

stood weeping and smiling alternately at my side, "Come, my good girl, take and discipline your charming lover in private, I must play the school-mistress here." The happy damsel and her gallant sailor instantly withdrew. A tender and delicate contest then arose between the wounded knight and the more deeply wounded widow, concerning the share each should take in providing for this lovely couple, who are at all events to be speedily married.—I, who am, you know, an admirable œconomist in saving the money of my friends, have, I think, settled the business very ingeniously, without any great expence on either side. My proposal is, to marry them immediately (for I am ever, you know, a staunch friend to Hymen), and let them act directly as governor and governess to the children of this house and of ours: this plan will succeed if it has the deliberate sanction of my husband, with whom I am to talk it over at our leisure; at present we are all too much exhilarated, by the joyous arrival of Monson, to debate any point very seriously.

Cornelia, who is at my elbow, and who, by the way, looks more beautiful to-day than she ever did in her life, will not allow me to scribble a moment longer. Here is indeed a grand packet already; and my husband writes also to our dear batchelor. So pardon an abrupt adieu, after a history of such comfort and joy; and believe me, my dear Lucy,

Ever your affectionate Sister.

L E T.

L E T T E R X L.

FROM MR. AUDLEY, TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

IT is with peculiar delight, my dear Edmund, that I send you such intelligence of your friend as I know will be most welcome to your affectionate heart, and operate as the most animating of cordials on your reviving health.

The brave, the generous, the engaging Seymour, is, in truth, as great a favourite with us all as you can wish him to be. He is admired by one sex, and idolized by the other. As to my lovely ward, of all the modest enamoured women that I have happened to meet with, she is by many degrees the most deeply impassioned. I never saw the emotions of genuine love so completely visible in a reserved and delicate character. I have studied her minutely in the few days we have been here; and there has hardly passed an hour in which her attempts to stifle or conceal her passion have not rendered it more imperious and more apparent. The distant prophecy of my dear Harriot is on the point of being fully accomplished. Chance and Nature seem to have conspired in producing every incident and every feeling most likely to promote a match that is ardently wished, I know, not only by the parties themselves, but by many of their friends. I have formerly expressed to you, with my usual frankness, all my fears and scruples

ples on this very delicate business ; it will, I am sure, make you happy to hear from my own hand, that these scruples are vanquished by the beneficent virtues of your friend. You well know my private wishes concerning both yourself and him ; and what cordial satisfaction it would give me, to see two men, whose general conduct is so consonant to the purest Religion, more seriously attached to that only solid foundation both of virtue and of happiness. I do not despair of one day possessing this satisfaction. In the mean time, I must content myself with saying of you both, in my own mind, what Pope, I think, said openly of Garth, that “ if there are good Christians in the world, without knowing themselves to be so, you and Seymour are such.”

Let me request you, for two reasons, my dear Edmund, to come speedily to us. First, to establish your own recovery, by a seasonable change of air. And, secondly, to take charge of your young friend, who cannot, I think, in decency, remain here much longer ; and had better be stationed with you till the period arrives when a marriage so universally desired may properly take place. How ardently you, Lucy, and Harriot (not to speak of the dear dainty widow herself), are panting for that period, I am fully apprized ; and, believe me, I am disposed to say, with as much cordiality as of any of you,

“ All Heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selected influence !”

As my dear Harriot has, with her usual rapidity, prepared a little volume of our diurnal history, which travels to Lucy with this ; I say not a word of the joyous occurrences to which I am persuaded her pen has done ample justice. I have only to add, that Seymour sends you both his kindest good wishes, with the two letters enclosed. He has been so obliging as to favour me with a perusal of the two ; and, different as they are, they have both entertained me exceedingly. Adieu. And be assured, that your friend, instead of finding an enemy in me, will soon find it difficult to determine by which of the Audleys he is most beloved. He has, believe me, the cordial esteem and best wishes of,

Your affectionate Brother.

LETTER XLI.

SEYMOUR TO THE ADMIRAL.

SIR,

THE wound I have lately received from you, which is in no danger of proving mortal, might justify me, perhaps, in addressing you with the language of hostility and defiance.

But,

But, notwithstanding what has passed between us, I am ambitious of courting your friendship ; to which I have an hereditary claim. You may have learnt from rumour, that the young man you shot in a late hasty scuffle is the son of a person whom, though long deceased, you probably remember with regard, as the intimate friend of your youth. Allow me, Sir, in right of my father, to speak to you the genuine language of friendship ; to express a sincere esteem for your public character, and a lively interest in your glory ; to solicit your reciprocal regard ; to give you information, and let me presume to say advice, of infinite importance to your tranquillity and your honour.

You may, perhaps, be incensed against me for my late conduct ; but your anger will cease, I trust, in recollecting that you, in my place, would have acted exactly as I did. I know how difficult it is for a high spirit to relish the idea of retreating, either in war or in love ; but permit me to remind you, that a retreat in both may be sometimes more honourable than a victory. In the point to which I allude, this maxim is strictly true. You may do infinite credit to yourself, by relinquishing all thoughts of the girl whom you were so resolved to possess. Believe me, Sir, her heart is invariably fixed on the humble, yet gallant lad, whose fortune and liberty are in your power. I doubt not but, when you are convinced of this truth, however mortifying it may be to your passion, your spirit will suggest to you how a brave man ought to behave towards a successful, yet dependant rival.

Let

Let me add, that, in the name of my father, and as the highest favour you can shew to the son of a man once so dear to you, I most fervently and respectfully request from you the immediate discharge of Edward Monson.

My connections in life are such that I could soon obtain, from the highest naval authority, what I would much rather receive from your indulgence.

The son of your spirited old friend may be permitted to add, as a proof of his legitimacy, that, if his just and courteous petitions are rejected, he wants not either resolution or perseverance to carry those points by force, which honour and justice have excited him to pursue.

I shall close this friendly letter by the best of good wishes, that, as you have gained many laurels by conquering our public enemy, you may now enrich them with a nobler palm, by subduing yourself. This, as all the great moralists assure us, is the most honourable of victories; and that it may be soon added to those which have already reflected a lustre on your name, is the ardent wish of, Sir,

Your most humble and

faithful servant.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

THE ADMIRAL'S ANSWER.

YOU are a lad of spirit; and I am glad to find you inherit the cleverness, as well as the courage of your father. Though I certainly thought you a cursed impertinent fellow, I rejoice in your escape. I would rather have sent the whole sex to the devil, than have killed so promising a son of my lively old friend poor Ned.

I thank you for your good advice; and give you this in return. Make the most of your youth among the girls, as you see what slippery and ungrateful jades they are to a grey-headed lover. I dismiss, at your request, the happy rascal who had the art to steal from me the finest wench in the world.

He comes to you with this and his discharge in his pocket. So I hope to hear and to think no more of this d——d foolish business.

Yours faithfully.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

I SEND off a servant express to stop our dear Edmund, if he is not already on his way to this house, so lately the scene of hope and exultation, and now of despondency and wretchedness, of wretchedness produced from the most idle piece of folly that ever was heard of. Alas! my dear Lucy, all our high-raised hopes are, I fear, overthrown for ever. Seymour himself has ruined all, in a fit of intoxication, or rather of frenzy. Surely wine was an invention of the devil, to render man an image of himself. My father takes the part I apprehended he would on the slightest opportunity of this kind. My dear Audley is labouring with his usual goodness to repair the mischief that intemperance has produced; but I am afraid it is irreparable. Poor Cornelia is more dead than alive; but, as the man and horse are waiting, I will dispatch this immediately; and send you particulars by the post. I am anxious that you and my brother should now remain at home, as I am persuaded your friend will not continue here under his present disgrace, but will fly to you for consolation and counsel.

No words can express how grieved to the heart I am for this provoking destroyer of his own and our felicity, and still more for the unoffending sufferer.

sufferer. Farewell: the moment I have sealed this I shall begin a full account of the bitter change in our scene, as I know you will sympathise but too deeply with

Your mortified, yet not utterly

hopeless and ever affectionate,

HARRIOT.

LETTER XLIV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

A LAS! my dear Lucy, I feel so dispirited, exasperated, and bewildered, so intoxicated in short with rage against intoxication, that I can hardly collect soberness of spirit sufficient to give you the sad circumstantial history that I have promised. How very grievous is it to have seen the most delightful of human prospects so foolishly and miserably blasted in a moment! Ah! my dear girl, what inconsiderate wretches are these captivating men! I am almost inclined to think you perfectly right, in having renounced them entirely. It is no wonder that the complaints of human infelicity are so frequent. How many, many virtues, are required, to form
that

that rare, and lovely spectacle, happiness ! and how able is a single vice to produce in an instant that common and deplorable sight, extensive misery ! You will not be surprised that I am sunk into this moralizing fit, since, as poor Calista says on a very different occasion,

Here's room for meditation e'en to madness.

Our present trouble is the more bitter, because the prelude to it was a scene of the purest pleasure that I ever experienced. I must begin by telling you, that yesterday happened to be the birth-day of the eldest Sedley. Seymour, who is passionately fond of this charming boy, requested that the day might be celebrated with peculiar festivity ; and that, to render it a double jubilee, it might be fixed for the wedding-day of Monson and Caroline ; my father, who exults in all festivity that carries a religious sanction along with it, not only joined in the request, but desired to have the pleasure of uniting this lovely couple : you will believe this business was readily adjusted without a dissentient, or even a hesitating voice ; for Caroline, though truly modest, has not a grain of prudery in her composition. Seymour, who was recovered enough to attend the ceremony, which was performed in the chapel here, acted as father to the bride, with his usual elegance of manners ; and visibly felt emotions, not inferior to those of a real parent on the occasion. Here I wished not a little for you, my dear Lucy ; for, as you think a wedding where youth and beauty are united,

with

with genuine affection, a very touching drama, you must have shed many delicious tears had you been with us : there was no creature present but ourselves, and five servants of the family : my father read the service with peculiar energy and feeling, and the whole scene was conducted with such devout decency, and universal delight, that for my part I wept, I believe, from one end of it to the other : how poor Cornelia was affected I really cannot tell you, for she very ingeniously contrived to conceal her face the whole time ; but she did not escape from the chapel without a visible crimson blush, which the tender Caroline very innocently occasioned. The gentlemen, as usual, paid their compliment to the bride ; but, as soon as Seymour had touched her lip, this charming girl, who is perfectly the child of nature, dropt on her knee, and, kissing his hand, said to him, with all the enthusiasm of simplicity and gratitude, “ May Heaven, Sir, soon make you as happy as you have now made your two grateful dependents ! I should deserve to lose the husband you have given me, if I departed from the altar without uttering this prayer of my heart.” Most of the party smiled at the native innocence and thankful energy of her devotion. Seymour raised and kissed her again in a rapture of reciprocal gratitude, while poor Cornelia was covered, not with one blush, but a succession of blushes ; which I leave you, my dear Lucy, to interpret as you please. You, I know, will interpret them as a sort of silent counterpart to the audible prayer of Caroline. Why, good Heaven, was the prayer of so pure
and

and fervent a spirit to be rejected? Why was the well-deserved happiness of this excellent couple to be poisoned so cruelly just in its completion?—Poisoned it certainly is; for these good grateful creatures are too warmly attached to their benefactor, to enjoy even their union, now they find he is unhappy. He has indeed made himself completely so for the present, and perhaps for the rest of his days.

I am called from my paper to attend my husband and our afflicted hostess. Adieu for some hours; I will resume my narration the first moment that I am at liberty.

I return to you, my dear Lucy, with a spirit both saddened and comforted by what I have been witness to since I quitted my pen. You will join with me, I am sure, in loving my dear indulgent Audley still better, if possible, than ever, when I tell you what pains he is taking to counteract the horrid incidents of yesterday which I am still to relate to you. Before I enter upon them I must acquaint you that my husband has just put Seymour into our chaise, to convey him in his present humiliated, yet still too fiery state of spirits, to a scene of solitude and friendship. They are to pass two days alone together at our house, and return to us on the third; this is a benevolent project of my husband's, from which he has great expectations; I am to remain here with my father, and to keep him, if possible, in a sort of silent neutrality, that we may all meet again without any discord; passing (to use my dear Audley's parliamentary phrase) an act of indemnity and oblivion. I most heartily wish
indeed

indeed that we could all swallow a cup of Lethe, and entirely forget the evening of yesterday. As soon as I have fulfilled my promise of imparting to you in this packet the circumstances that have rendered it so detestable, I shall strive with all my spirit to banish them, not only from my own remembrance, but from that of our poor Cornelia, on whose tender bosom they have made the most deep and cruel impression; an impression which, if it is, as my father asserted, the provident work of Heaven, I must not expect, and I should not wish, to erase. But there is, as you and I have often agreed, a severity in his doctrine, to which I cannot immediately subscribe. I was at first, indeed, most bitterly provoked against Seymour: he ought to have been more on his guard at such a time and in such a place; yet such are the particulars of the case, that he seems to me much more entitled to compassion than to censure, and cannot help thinking it a barbarous fatality that made him wretched just at the season when the beneficent exertion of his many virtues had given him the fairest title to happiness. It was the most trifling circumstance imaginable that produced all the mischief. You know, my father is no enemy to moderate festivity; or, as your brother said of him, he has a true priestly relish for an orthodox bottle. As our ill fortune would have it, he chanced, two days before our humble wedding, to commend before Seymour some very rich and rare wine; its name I forget; it is not *tokay*. Seymour recollected that he had a little store of it in his cellar, which a foreign ambassador

bassador had presented to his father ; and he instantly resolved to produce a hamper of it at the wedding-dinner, and to honour the birth-day of the dear little Sedley. We all exclaimed against it as an impossibility ; it could not arrive in time ; no matter, it must be attempted : you know the foible of our hero ; his ardent spirit pursues even a sportive whim of his fancy, as if it was a point on which the safety of an empire depended. His favourite servant was sent off, and commanded to return with a hamper in a post-chaise by the time appointed. The fellow travelled day and night ; but you know the great distance of Seymour's country-seat from this house. The expected wine did not arrive for the capital toasts after dinner ; yet in the universal joy of the day it was hardly regretted. The evening came, and we were all sober and happy, though the gentlemen seemed a little elated by what they had drank. Cornelia, however, had drawn them from their bottles to her tea-table, to which, at my particular desire, the bride and bridegroom were admitted, for I was solicitous to save the modest Caroline from that jocular and coarse festivity which I knew would prevail in the lower part of the house : as it was, my father put her once out of countenance before us ; it is strange that old men are always on these occasions more gross than young ones. Here, I must do him the justice to say, our favourite Seymour appeared to great advantage. His conversation, though very lively, was delicate in the extreme ; and thus far, indeed, it was a day of delight. It was now late in the evening ;

evening ; but, just as the tea-table was removed, and preparation was making for a quiet game of cards, the fatal hamper arrived. Seymour instantly exclaimed, Come, Doctor, you shall drink the health of the day in your favourite wine. Come, Monson, it would be barbarous to pin a bridegroom to a card-table, especially as it is high time for the ladies to begin undressing the bride. We will leave them to that ceremony, and drink to the general joy of the whole house below." With this festive exclamation he carried off my father to his wine, leading also young Sedley in his hand. He promised Cornelia, however, that he would only suffer the child to have a glass of the new wine, and restore him instantly to her care ; a promise which he performed very faithfully, and in person imprinting a kiss on the fair hand of the parent, in placing the charming but tired and sleepy boy on her bosom.

Would to Heaven he had taken as good care of himself ! My heart felt a melancholy preface in the very moment when he seized my father by the arm, and I gave my husband a caution to watch over them both ; which he would certainly have done, had not a most unseasonable accident called him from the party. The happy Monson, who is as temperate as he is brave, could not be tempted beyond a second glass ; after which, in spite of their raillery, he stole away to the arms of his expecting Caroline. In a few minutes after he left the company, my dear Audley was most unluckily intreated by the old Butler to terminate a foolish quarrel between
one

one of our servants and one of Cornelia's. This idle fray detained him much longer than he was aware, and on his return to the parlour he found Seymour and my father both flushed with wine, and both still more heated by argument, with the large Family Bible lying open between them; my father venting his indignation with great vehemence against the prophaneness of Seymour; and Seymour playing numerous and unutterable tricks of impious buffoonery. In vain did my dear Audley endeavour to put them into good humour with each other, and get them quietly to bed. Finding this impracticable, he conceived a desperate project, of which you will hardly think him capable, but for which you will give him the more credit. This was, to make the two disputants completely drunk, that they might entirely forget what they had uttered against each other, and lose every trace of their religious dissention. He says, he thought himself supremely politic in this scheme, and was flattered with a momentary gleam of success; but Seymour, by an unfortunate allusion to the marriage in Cana, rekindled the furious zeal of my father, who, after uttering the bitterest rebuke to the young intoxicated infidel, quitted the room in a tempest of pious indignation. Seymour, whose volatile spirits were now raised to the most frantic merriment, wanted first to detain and then to follow him. This, however, my husband prevented, and by great exertions kept his wild companion from exposing himself to the servants. Alas! my dear Lucy, what a strange night of mingled joy and horror was

this ! the different scenes of it are so deeply impressed on my mind, that I think they can never depart from my memory as long as I exist ; and they will frequently appear as actually passing before me. But you are impatient for the sequel. Well ; after a little pause, and a few deep sighs, I will proceed.

Cornelia and I had just attended the lovely bride to her chamber. We had received her last maidenly adieu ! and left the charming agitated girl in a sweet disorder of tremors, tenderness, and tears. From her room we had retired to that of Cornelia, where in two little beds on each side her own, and under one canopy, her beautiful boys lay, like two little angels, asleep. Our lovely friend, whose tender nerves had been much affected in taking leave of Caroline, seated herself at the feet of her bed, and looked, as I was saucy enough to tell her, like a more hapless heroine described by Rowe,

“ Warm, tender, full of wishes.”

While I was rallying the gentle creature on her passion for Seymour, and the great chance he would have of success if he could press her to an immediate marriage at that moment ; while the dear candid soul more than half confessed that I was right in reading the emotions of her heart ; the door suddenly opened upon us, and in rushed my father, to warn the mistress of the mansion against harbouring such an impious wretch as Seymour under her roof.

Think,

Think, my dear Lucy, what I endured at this moment; and paint to yourself the sweet countenance of our Cornelia, changing at once from the soft expression of tenderness, love, and hope, to the troubled looks of surprize, remorse, and despair. I endeavoured to hurry my father from her chamber; but he was not in a mood to be either wheedled or controuled. He was certainly a little inflamed by wine; yet his faculties were rather quickened than impaired; and though he spoke with great austerity against the favourite object of our wishes, I must confess that I never heard him so eloquent in my life. He told Cornelia that, after the horrid blasphemies to which he had been witness below, he should think himself deficient in his duty to earth and heaven, if he failed to caution her against the peril in which he saw her involved. He then represented the dangers of marrying a young man of strong passions, without a particle of religion, with such vehemence of language, and force of imagery, that for my part I felt a cold horror strike through me, and poor Cornelia was thrown into sobs and tears.

When he perceived her weeping, he grew infinitely gentler in his manner, and, folding her hand within his, said, with a parental emotion, "I pity you from my soul: I see to what excess you love this alluring, this pernicious infidel. And how could you do otherwise than love him? He is the most seducing of mortals. a man who might easily tempt half your sex to make themselves the greatest of wretches! But consider, my dear lady, what dignity and firmness

ness of character we have a right to expect from you. I will not argue the matter as a point of reason and judgment ; but consult the best feelings of sensibility ; look at these little monitors (pointing to her children) and ask your own bosom if any partiality, any passion, however founded on the most dazzling of human attractions, can justify you to your own heart, if you give to these innocents for their example, their guide, their father, an absolute monster of impiety." The feeling mother was almost suffocated by her tears on this pointed address to her maternal character. Perceiving that she had no power to speak, and wishing (to own the truth) that she should not find an opportunity, lest she should utter some precipitate resolution, for which we might all be sorry in a cooler moment ; I ventured to argue with my father, at the imminent hazard of enraging him still more, in behalf of the dear abominable delinquent. I said, it was cruel to let a few words, however impious, uttered by an intoxicated man, cancel the merit of actions, not only splendid in point of generosity and courage, but distinguished by the true spirit of Christian charity. In short, I was bold in the defence of poor Seymour, and did ample and affectionate justice to those virtues by which he has raised himself so high in our esteem. My father heard me with a degree of temper and patience that I did not expect. He did not once interrupt me ; but he said, as soon as I paused ; " My dear Harriot, I do not blame you for looking with a fond and enthusiastic admiration on the noble and captivating

tivating accomplishments of this dangerous Seymour ; but, trust me, to marry a young man possessing all these attractions, and hiding under them a deep mass of impiety, is exactly like building a delightful palace in the tempting neighbourhood of Vesuvio. For a while you may be charmed with your situation ; the air is delicious, the prospect enchanting ; but a sudden and unexpected burst of the latent fire converts the gay residence of delusive security into a scene of the most terrific devastation, Believe me, there is nothing in the human character, on which it is safe to build, but the solid rock of Religion." Encouraged by the mildness with which my father had listened to me before, I attempted to moderate in some degree the austerity and intolerance of this maxim. By this attempt I unluckily rekindled his indignation ; and he said to me in a very severe tone, " Harriot, you are the last person in the world who ought to appear as an advocate for Irreligion ; have the gratitude and the decency to recollect, that all the rare happiness of your own life arises from my having given you a man of genuine piety for your husband." Then turning to Cornelia, he said, " Madam, you know how ardently I love my child : yet, I protest to you before God, I would rather have seen her sink into the grave in all the bloom of her youth and beauty, than I would have bestowed her on such a character as I am now endeavouring to caution you against." He added a short, but impassioned prayer, that his caution might
 prove

prove effectual; and then, giving us both his benediction, retired for the night.

As soon as we were alone, our lovely friend fell upon my neck, and wept most bitterly. She could not yet speak, but grasped my hand with the vehemence of a poor creature in agonies of pain. There was at this time a conflict in her heart and soul, more excruciating, perhaps, than any maladies of the body. She traversed her chamber with an agitated step; paused, looked at her children, wept, and walked again. I tried to sooth her by making light of what had passed; by representing it as a foolish dispute over a bottle, that would be utterly forgot the next day; but the lovely angel rebuked me with a look of displeasure, and exclaimed, "No, my dear Harriot, you must not any longer flatter and confirm me in this criminal attachment. I do not vainly strive to hide from you with what excess of passion I love Seymour at this moment. Yes, I love him with that frenzy, that, if only the Perdition of my own soul was hazarded by our union, perhaps I could not reject him; but for these dearer souls"—Here she cast her eyes again upon the sweet sleeping boys; her voice was suspended; but falling on her knee, at the feet of her own bed, so that she had an equal view of the two children, and raising to Heaven, perhaps, the most beautiful and impassioned countenance that ever looked up to its Creator, she said, with a trembling voice, "By the Almighty God who gave me these blessed infants, and by the dear saint whose dying injunction commended them to my duty, I swear that no temptations

tions shall induce me to make the impious Seymour their second father. I will never marry again." The last words she pronounced in a firmer and even a triumphant accent, for they were the dictates of duty and passion united. To sacrifice the man she doated on to Heaven was a resolve, which, though her mind was firm in its purpose, her lips could hardly utter; but to renounce all the sex in honor of this dear victim, was a fond idea in which her heart exulted; it was granting, under the mask and yet with the sanction of duty, a secondary triumph to Love.

Ah! my dear Lucy, do you not shudder at the thought of what our poor lovely friend must have to endure, either in keeping, or in violating this precipitate vow? For my part, I have the audacity, and I know, my good girl, you will support me in it, still to profess myself an advocate for this abominable offender. I cannot bear the idea of his being utterly renounced; and I maintain that not only Love and Friendship, but Religion itself ought to induce us all not to irritate and abandon, but to soothe him, and labour for his conversion. If we succeed, and from the gentle, firm, and persuasive spirit of my dear Audley, I have great hopes of success, the hasty vow of our dear righteous widow becomes void of course; we shall still be happy, and our happiness will be truly celestial. I endeavoured to calm our dear Cornelia, by talking to her in this strain as soon as she had finished her adjuration; and, troubled as her spirit was, it did not turn with abhorrence from this kind of consolation. See, my dear Lucy, how well it is for a tender scrupulous sweet
soul,

soul, like our Cornelia, to have such kind considerate commentators at her elbow as you and I are, when she is in the rash humour of vowing a vow ! While I was administering to her the comfort which she found in seeing that her hasty promise to Heaven was conditional, I heard a gentle tap at her door. Behold my husband ; “ For Heaven’s sake, said I, what have you done with Seymour ? has not this fatal wine made him frantic ? ” “ Be not alarmed, returned my good man, looking keenly on the anxious eager countenance of Cornelia. He has, indeed, been a little disguised, by a slight excess in drinking : but this is not surprizing after his recent low regimen, and on such a day as this ; his intemperance only proves the affectionate warmth of his heart ; it is now time for us all to retire, as I have put him very peaceably to bed.” “ Excellent, cried I, in a transport of joy, and now we may all sleep in peace.” In saying this, I gave a significant pressure to the hand of Cornelia, and we both wished her good night. And here, Lucy, I must take leave of you also with the same good wish. I can positively write no longer at present, but will resume my pen early to-morrow ; so once more good night.

Notwithstanding my presage that we should all sleep in peace, few mortals in health pass a night so sleepless on their pillow as we did. Cornelia confessed to me the next day, that she had hardly closed her eyes ; and as to Audley and myself, we were kept awake, first by talking over all the wild

wild vagaries and extravagancies of Seymour in his cups ; and, secondly, by meditating on the best possible method of reconciling him and my father, and drawing good out of evil. I have already told you the project, my dear girl, which your incomparable brother has devised for this purpose. He rose early, awakened the poor unconscious culprit into a sense of his trespass in the preceding evening ; and conveyed him from hence without his seeing either of the two persons who had most reason to be offended with his conduct. To both, however, he sent, at my husband's entreaty, and by his voice, a very humble and suppliant embassy ; and particularly to my father, whom he requested to forget every syllable, if any such were uttered, in his intoxication, that could appear in any degree offensive or disrespectful to his character as a Divine. To his gentle hostess he made the most tender apology ; said, he felt himself unworthy to enjoy the delight of seeing her the next day ; but, as he was going to punish himself for his transgression by an immediate and self imposed banishment from her presence, he trusted he should find her, on his return, more ready to pardon him than he was to forgive himself. You will easily guess how these messages were received by the two parties to whom they were addressed, as you know both so well. The tender widow said, that no apology was necessary to her : the rigid Divine declared that none was sufficient for him. I have had, indeed, a terrible task to keep the zeal of my father within tolerable bounds : but after a long private scene of argument, intreaty, and tears, on my

part, I have prevailed on him to promise me that he will say nothing more to Cornelia on the subject at present. I have even brought him to acquiesce in my opinion that the state of Seymour's affection, co-operating with the eloquence of my husband, may probably produce a very salutary effect on the creed of this enchanting unbeliever. Heaven grant my earnest prayer on this point! I need not tell you with what anxiety I expect their return. I wish it were possible to give you an account of it in this packet, as I know your solicitude on the subject will not be inferior to my own; but many anxious hours are yet to pass before the time of their expected arrival; and I have promised you this voluminous history by the very first post; you must accept it, therefore, imperfect as it is in every sense of that word. Be assured that you shall hear again soon; and believe me ever

Your affectionate sister.

P. S. I cannot close the paper without telling you, that the first sight I saw in entering Cornelia's chamber yesterday morning was our poor sleepless friend, venting her anguish to the sympathetic bosom of Caroline. What a contrast in their situations! What a picture did their beautiful but differently impassioned features present to me! it was Felicity comforting Despair. Farewell.

LETTER XLV.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

YOU, who are so familiar with the past follies of my life, you, my dear Edmund, will not be surprized to hear that I have again played the fool more detestably than ever. I have made myself a wretch; I have disgraced myself in the eyes of my adored Cornelia. I am no longer under her roof. I have committed—but why should I particularize my execrable offences to you, when you have probably learnt (by means of the women who write about every thing) more circumstances of my misconduct than I know myself.

In foolish desire to ingratiate myself with that odious high priest Dr. Ayton, who loves his bottle pontifically, I drank with him, on a double festival that we have celebrated here, on the birthday of the brave little Sedley, and the marriage of my sweet Caroline, till the Doctor lost his temper, and I my senses. All I can remember of the evening is, that we sputtered much pious and profane nonsense in the face of each other. Nothing could be so absurd; nothing so ill-timed; nothing so injurious to my love, as this execrable contention. I loath the sight of wine, and abhor myself for my folly. Yet I have found an apologist and a comforter, where I little expected, and less perhaps deserved to find him; 'tis with peculiar satisfaction that I add—in *your Brother*.
He

He has kindly hurried me from a scene where I have exposed and disgraced myself so egregiously, to his own tranquil mansion ; with a thoughtful good-nature that proved him really your brother. He suggested to me, that my best mode of apologizing for what I most bitterly repent, would be to withdraw for a few days, leaving only a conciliatory message for the persons who have the greatest right to be offended by my gross indecorum. He observed, that by thus giving the insulted Divine sufficient time to grow cool, I might probably induce him to forget our dispute ; and by shewing Cornelia that I punish myself for my transgression towards her by tearing myself from her presence, I should incline her to receive me with indulgence on my return. By the force of these friendly reasons, your brother drew me to his house ; we have now been under his roof the better part of two days alone, and during that time his incessant attention and kind behaviour to me have been such, that I cannot more strongly express my sense of it to you, than by telling you the words I addressed to him a few minutes ago, on our closing a private conference of some hours. They were the words of Agrippa to Paul, " Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian !"

It has indeed been the eager wish of his benevolent heart to make me such on this important occasion ; and if either the impulse of Love, or the arguments of Friendship, could induce me to sacrifice my reason or my sincerity, I should certainly either feel or profess, at this critical juncture, a perfect reverence for mysteries, which my spirit, my dear Edmund, as well as yours,
has

has ever considered as a mixture of the unintelligible and the ridiculous. I reverence, indeed, his ardent philanthropy, and I admire his happiness, which is, as I freely allowed him, superior to what you and I have ever enjoyed, or may ever attain; but this, which he ascribes to his Religion, is the kind work of Nature; it is owing to the constitutional equipoise of his passions, and the peculiar felicity of his temper. He is a man whom superstition cannot spoil; and this, as I told him, is a grand panegyric; for the very best kind of superstition is apt to vitiate whatever it touches. I am not sure that even the pure, the tender, the generous bosom of my Cornelia herself can resist its influence.

At the instigation of that rigid and angry priest whom I have foolishly made my enemy, she may perhaps reject me for ever—reject the very man to whom she is, in truth, attached by affection, by gratitude, and every honest emotion of her frame. My soul is in tumult at this idea! I am conscious that I have deserved to experience some little portion of her anger. I want no Gospel to tell me, that intoxication is a beastly failing. I am ready to purchase her forgiveness, by renouncing intemperance for ever; but I have too much noble pride to purchase even her person, though it is the only jewel in the world to my apprehension, by making myself either a fool or a hypocrite. We return to morrow. How she will receive me I know not: but if she treats me with a coldness and disdain which I am sure are foreign to her nature, I feel it may drive me to distraction. Good heavens! to lose such a lovely
and

and loving creature, just when her delicious lips have half declared she is devoted to me by protesting she would have no other! Oh, the very idea is momentary mandefs! I will banish it from my brain. And surely the reality, my dear Edmund, would be too heavy a punishment for the offences, the involuntary and repented offences, of

Your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XLVI.

FROM MR. AUDLEY TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

I TRUST that my last letter convinced you, my dear Edmund, how sincerely my heart is disposed to promote the wishes of your engaging friend. His very failings have increased my attachment to him, as they shew me, that, with a spirit peculiarly benevolent and generous to others, he is a most dangerous enemy to himself. My dear Harriot, who really feels for him all the solicitude of a sister, has given you, I conclude, a very melancholy detail of the foolish and provoking incidents that have produced a most uncomfortable change of scene in the house of Cornelia. I brought Seymour to pass a few days with me in privacy, under my own roof, for two reasons: first, I was very desirous to prevent the renewal, and, if possible, to annihilate the memory, of a furious theological dispute, which arose between him and Dr. Ayton, in a luckless night of intemperate

perate festivity. Secondly, I cherished a hope, that in the quiet of this sequestered scene, and in many successive hours of unreserved and friendly conversation, I might be fortunate enough to remove from the mind of this interesting young man the only obstacle to his happiness; I mean, that infidelity which seems to have fastened on his spirit, more from the power of accident than from any natural disposition in his character to produce or maintain it. It is with the most cordial concern I perceive, that my powers of argument and persuasion are too weak to accomplish in your friend, my dear Edmund, as in you, that happy conversion which I most ardently wish to behold in you both. I have searched as deeply as I could the springs of incredulity in each of you; and I find that these springs are very different; but, alas! they are equally powerful against my wish in your behalf. Rousseau, I think, has said, that the faith of most men is regulated upon earth by their temporal interest. This, however, is by no means the case with an English gentleman of independent fortune, whose creed has little connexion with his temporal prosperity, that many parents in this rank of life, while they teach worldly maxims to their children, think it unnecessary to burthen them with religious ideas. Thus young men are left to pick up such a religion as Time and Chance may happen to afford them. Their faith, of course, will greatly depend on their early connexions in life, and still more on their particular humours and passions. I think, my dear Edmund, that this remark is very strongly exemplified in you and your friend

Seymour:

Seymour : in you, as I have often told you, infidelity is the offspring of a vitiated imagination : in Seymour, it is the child of an imperious passion, and, I fear, the firmest of passions, pride. It pleased Heaven to give you, with a strong understanding, a much greater propensity to ridicule and sarcasm than is commonly united to a heart so tender as yours ; the applause very justly given to your early wit and humour augmented this dangerous propensity ; thus your mind was allured into the habit of considering even the most serious objects in a ludicrous point of view ; your first associates in the world were unfortunately men who treated Christianity with derision ; you were amused in laughing with them, and pleased to increase their merriment by your superior vivacity. But as the fire of youth abated, your natural good sense, my dear Edmund, soon taught you, on these articles, a great degree of caution and reserve ; you ceased to ridicule Religion ; but though prudence and good nature conspired to make you desist from a practice which you could not pursue without creating to yourself many enemies, you could not correct the internal mischief which the habit, too long indulged, had impressed upon your mind. You could, indeed, cease to ridicule Religion ; but you could not cease to think Religion ridiculous. The bias given to your youthful fancy was too powerful for your reason, even in its maturity, to counteract ; and how many men have we seen unable, in advanced life, to embrace the comforts of genuine piety, from no other cause but the having been idly tempted to laugh at them in their youth ! It is difficult in
the

the highest degree to bring the human spirit to contemplate with reverence what it has once been accustomed to treat with derision; and as to yourself, my dear Edmund, I am convinced, as I have often said to you, by my own ineffectual but affectionate endeavours to change the cast of your mind, that nothing but some great and unexpected calamity or sickness; nothing, in short, but some striking event, that may convulse, as it were, like an earthquake, your whole bodily and intellectual frame, can take from your warped imagination that unfortunate bent which I have so frequently lamented. With your friend Seymour I had flattered myself on a prospect of better success: as his mind has not been so much under the fascination of ridicule, I hoped to find it more open to Reason. I was willing to think that even his passions might act as my confederates; and that Love, which has settled, as you sportively said, the creed of many princes, might help me to make a happy convert of him; but Love, I find, in its warmest excess, is a passion much weaker than Pride; at least it proves so in your friend. He doats upon Cornelia; but, with a firmness of proud incredulity which I both lament and admire, he will not purchase even the idol of his heart by what he considers a sacrifice of his own dignity as a man; nay, so tenacious is he of imaginary honour in this point, that if my long and repeated conferences had really converted him, he says he should be almost tempted to suppress his belief at this juncture, lest his friends should suppose that Love had made him an hypocrite in Religion: so vehement is his detestation to every shadow of duplicity and falshood.

It

It is impossible not to love a character so open, so ingenuous, so ardent, and so firm, however deluded he may be : it is equally impossible (at least for a man who thinks seriously of Religion), not to wish him possessed of the only thing which can render his enchanting qualities no longer dangerous to himself. You, my dear brother, have both experience and discretion, I might even say timidity, in the conduct of life, to protect you against the perils of your own foibles and passions ; but it is not so with our friend : undisguised in all he thinks, and precipitate in all he does, he is peculiarly exposed to the malice of fortune ; and the more I reflect on his present situation, the more I am alarmed for what is to come.

As to myself, he has reduced me to a most uncomfortable dilemma : I cannot take an active part in opposing his wishes, without wounding, not only my friendship for you, but those sentiments of regard with which he has inspired me for himself. Nor can I be very earnest and decisive in promoting his hopes of marrying Cornelia, consistently with my conscience. I have the sincerest good wishes to them both ; I clearly perceive they are so deeply enamoured of each other, that they must be wretched asunder ; yet, if they are united, there is a prospect of equal, and perhaps of superior wretchedness, from their unhappy difference in the great article of Religion : an article which the dying injunction of poor Sedley has rendered so peculiarly important to Cornelia, that I question indeed if Seymour, with the united powers of Love and Friendship, with his own attractions, and my recommendation (if I
dared

dared to recommend him) could triumph, without a change in his creed, over the scrupulous piety of my lovely ward. I am almost convinced that she would perish in those wasting maladies which are apt to arise from vehement disappointed affection, much rather than gratify her heart by a violation of her duty; yet a woman, a tender, young, and impassioned woman, is, we all know, a frail creature; and perhaps I ought to take the most determinate steps to secure the gentle being, bequeathed to my care, from a trial so perilous and severe.

I am truly bewildered by the various vexations, perplexities, and dangers on every side. I feel, however, that my mind has gained some little relief in thus copiously unburthening itself to you. I am sure you will be ready to co-operate with me in what I most wish at present, which is, to keep Seymour as quiet as possible; any precipitate importunity in his addresses just now would be very cruel to Cornelia, and must, I think, be ruinous to himself. He appears not a little affected by the sincerity of my zeal for his happiness, and he promises to be guided in a great measure, as to his present conduct, by me; but I perceive the impetuosity of his spirit, and am perfectly aware that it will be very difficult to keep him from acting according to the sudden and accidental impulse of his imperious passion. As you are the only person in the world possessing long and confirmed influence over this impetuous youth, pray let your letters to him be persuasive lessons of tranquillity and patience. By gaining time, we may do much for his good. I should tell you,
he

he has made one generous and important concession; he has promised, that, if he marries Cornelia, all her children shall be educated as devoutly as she and I may think proper. He will never interfere with the religion of his own wife or her family. He even thinks they may be much the happier for being good Christians; yet, so inconsistent are men, they will take no pains to eradicate from their own minds those early habits and prejudices which have hardened them against a faith, whose beneficial influence on the happiness of its true professors they candidly acknowledge.

But, lest you should think I am giving you a sermon without end, my dear Edmund, I will only add, that we return to-morrow to Sedley-hall; and that I propose on the following day to remove the whole party to my house; for which I have an excellent plea, in the visit I expect from my dear Harriot's lively niece, Louisa Mountmaurice, who is coming to pass a month with us, and coming as she says in a saucy note that I found from her here, with a resolution to rob the lovely widow of her wounded knight, and make a conquest of the gallant Seymour for herself. Whether she succeeds or not, you will be informed in due time. Accept my benediction on yourself and Lucy; and believe me ever,

Your affectionate brother.

LETTER XLVII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

BEHOLD me, dear Edmund, restored to Sedley-hall; and my good genius himself seemed to hail my return, in the shape of a servant, who informed me, as your brother and I alighted at the door, that Dr. Ayton is gone to London. I could not help exclaiming, in the words of Macbeth,

“ Being gone, I am myself again.”

In sober truth, I greatly dreaded a second meeting with this stiff piece of orthodox austerity. I neither chose to play the servile penitent, or the hypocrite, with him; nor to let him play the insolent school-master and tyrannical bigot with me. I thank my stars, that the tidings of a tottering mitre have hurried him to the metropolis, that he may watch it as the witch does the drop on the corner of the moon, and “ catch it ere it fall to the ground.”

My dear indulgent Cornelia has received me with that graceful gentleness which is so peculiar to herself; and she made so kind a reply to my repeated apology for my late transgression, that, as I told her, I felt the various pains that I have suffered from my folly delightfully repaid in the sweetness of her pardon. There is indeed a delicacy

licacy in the manners of Cornelia, which I never found in those of any other woman, and which is the result of her genuine, unaffected, and temperate sensibility. The whole sex may, I think, be comprehended in two classes, the lively and the serious; the first often overwhelm us by their vivacity, and the second by their gloom. But Cornelia is a perfect model of the true happy medium. Her gaiety is as mild and benignant as the smile of an angel; and her melancholy, instead of diffusing sadness, inspires only tenderness and love. Such she has appeared to me on the many, many reflections which I have made in various humours on this incomparable woman: yet I must add with sorrow, that although her first reception of me was enchantingly gracious, and perfectly like herself, in some moments since my return I have thought I perceived a new character creeping like a mist over her mind. Her native ease has now and then changed into a cold and stately politeness, that struck like a falling icicle on my bosom, and seemed both to lacerate and to petrify my heart. I could not help whispering to her, though there was company in the room, "If you treat me with an air of proud indifference, you will very soon make a madman of me for life." I believe she was both vexed and pleased by this intimation; it had certainly a happy influence on her behaviour and my feelings; for she never spoke to me afterwards but with such a softness of voice that the tones of it sunk into my soul. Oh, Edmund, this dear delicious woman must
be

be mine, or my life will not be worth preserving!

What has passed in our short absence I have not yet learned; as I have only had a few encouraging looks from my very good friend Mrs. Audley, and a brief exhortation from her not to be precipitate, but resign myself to Hope and Heaven. She is an indulgent kind creature; and she has been, I understand, very warm in my defence, at the hazard of incurring her righteous father's displeasure. Yet, much as she is my friend, I cannot depend on her imparting to me explicitly all that I want to know. But I have one sure channel of intelligence. As soon as I can get my grateful Caroline alone, I am confident that her gratitude will induce her to reveal to me all the secrets of the female cabinet, to which I know she is admitted. It is fortunate for me, that she and her happy Monson are to return with us and the ladies to your brother's. He has kindly insisted on carrying us all to his own hospitable mansion to-morrow, where he expects to find a niece of Mrs. Audley's from Ireland, a lovely girl, they say, and wonderfully like Cornelia in form and shape of her features, but not so in the expression of her countenance, since vivacity is the characteristic of one, and tenderness of the other. Mrs. Audley has been jesting with me, concerning the beauties of her niece, and a design, which she sportively ascribes to her, of making a conquest of me. By Heaven, I thought that Cornelia, who overheard part of our discourse without our intending it, turned pale at the sound! O Venus! if this soft creature

creature should really love me well enough to grow seriously jealous of a young Irish hoyden! if she does, I defy the devil himself, and a legion of his love-thwarting priests, to keep us asunder. But I must bid you very hastily adieu. Indeed I should not have written till we are all comfortably settled for a few weeks at Audley Grove, had I not thought you would be particularly anxious for an account of my reception from the dear offended hosts of this mansion. I was eager also to inform you of the seasonable departure of the odious high-priest, and the prospect, or rather the glimpse I have, of new and exquisite delight, under the friendly roof of your brother. Among all the joys of an enraptured heart there can be none superior to that of raising a sweet impassioned woman, whose fond imagination has plunged her in the torments of jealous terror, to the paradise of tranquil and confident affection. Farewell; and fail not to wish that the joy which I anticipate in my fancy, may soon be actually possessed by

Your very faithful

and affectionate,

SEYMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XLVIII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

YOUR good-natured heart, my dear Lucy, will rejoice in being told that our cloudy prospect is grown wonderfully clearer; an unexpected incident has happened, which contributes not a little to our general ease and comfort, though I am almost ashamed to speak of it, even to you, as a source of satisfaction; for the incident I mean is the sudden departure of my father, who has been hastily summoned, by private business, to London. I trust that I revere him as much as I ought to do, and I am sure I do full justice to the goodness of his intentions; yet, to own the truth to you, no tender Miss, watching for an opportunity to receive a lover in private, ever heard the departing wheels of her father's carriage with more heartfelt satisfaction than I did. I had terrified myself with the idea, that, by being *righteous over much*, he would ruin, not only the happiness, but the health of our poor Cornelia; who, if it is necessary at last (which Heaven forbid!) that her infantine heart should be weaned from its idol, must be treated, during that cruel operation, with a gentleness and indulgence, not very compatible with the

VOL. I.

O

inflexible

inflexible and imperious integrity of my father. But he is gone, and without a prospect of returning hither; for which I believe you also, my good girl, will be wicked enough to exclaim, "Heaven be praised!"—I have still greater news for you. The bewitching offender is returned, and received, and forgiven; whether my good man has brought him back to us exactly what we wish, I cannot inform you, as we have had no time for private conversation, and I write in great haste, to tell you we are all preparing to decamp. My niece Louisa is by this time at Audley Grove; and our whole party is to adjourn to our house, for the better reception of this charming sprightly girl, who has at length obtained the permission of her father to pass a few months with us. She is determined, she says, to set her cap at your gallant and princely Seymour. Do you not tremble for poor Cornelia? Alas! what hypocrites we weak women would be, if we could, to one another, and to ourselves! Would you believe that our candid friend, on my jesting with her a few minutes ago about Louisa and Seymour, had the hypocrisy to say, she wished it might be a match! On my answering her only with a keen glance of penetration and reproof she burst into tears, and said, with her native ingenuous tenderness, "*I strive to wish it; but I cannot.*"

Here she comes again into my room, I suppose with some anxious enquiry concerning this formidable Louisa; but of this, and all other interesting matters, I will write to you very soon after my return; at present I can only add, that
 Cornelia

Cornelia desires to be most kindly remembered to you; and that I am, with much better hopes than when I closed my last packet,

Your affectionate sister,

HARRIOT AUDLEY.

LETTER XLIX.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

YOUR letters, my dear Seymour, have acted as medicine upon my spirits in the course of an illness into which I have relapsed, and from which I am once more recovered. Sometimes indeed the medicine was too strong for the patient; and at one period my anxiety for you, and my terrors of Dr. Ayton, considerably increased the nervous fever, which has proved such an obstinate enemy to my health and comfort. But the high-priest's most seasonable departure, and the very cordial regard which I am now doubly assured my brother has conceived for you, inspire me with salutary and enlivening hopes. I clearly perceive that the capricious Goddess Good-fortune is hastening to embrace you, and complete your happiness. Do not, I conjure you, in your impetuous eagerness to meet her, beat the fair Divinity backwards, and overset all her intended bounty.

You find me, as usual, still ready to load you with cautionary counsel ; and in truth, my dearest friend, I never knew any period in your eventful life, where I saw greater reason, or felt a more anxious desire, to throw a gentle curb over the native precipitancy of your spirit. Indeed, in proportion as you have advanced in that path which is to lead, I trust, to happiness, I have felt more and more solicitous, lest one hasty false step should prevent your reaching the object of your ambition. You are now happily advanced so far, that if you will but trust patiently to Time, he will complete your wishes ; and believe me, however nonsensically it may sound to you both in expression and sentiment, to stand still is your surest way to get forward. You have gained the heart of the woman you love ; you have gained the friendship of the man whose situation, and, allow me to say, whose virtues give him a fair title to influence her conduct, but, justly regarded as you are by both, they are both very full of certain apprehensions concerning you ; if by any rash and passionate attempts to accelerate the event for which you are so eager, you increase and exasperate these apprehensions, the consequence must be universal wretchedness to us all ; but if, on the other hand, you act with the generous forbearance that I am now ardently recommending to you, their fears will gradually evaporate ; you will appear to them the disinterested, affectionate, and generous being which you really are ; your success must be inevitable, since you have no rivals to apprehend ;

hend; and, in thus securing your own happiness, you will make us all happy.

I could wish that my good brother had been successful in his very zealous endeavours for your conversion. Since it is otherwise, allow me to suggest to your reflection how far it may be consistent, I will not say with prudence, for I know you despise that cold-blooded quality; but with love, honour, and generosity, to assume an appearance of that creed which your mistress and your friend have so affectionately wished to impress upon your mind. It is needless, I trust, to assure you, that I have an abhorrence as vehement as your own for all the arts of a sordid and selfish hypocrisy. But when dissimulation is practised for no purpose but to ensure the tranquillity and happiness of those we love, it ought surely to lose the name and character of baseness, and to be ranked among the noblest of virtues; it is then that we may speak of falsehood in the spirited language of Tasso, and justly say,

“Magnanima menfogna! or quando è il vero
Si bello, che si possa a te preporre!”

“Magnanimous falsehood! when is truth so beautiful as to merit the preference to thee!”

I quote an Italian poet, to shew you that I have not utterly neglected your injunction concerning that language; though I reproach myself for not having learned it, as I ought to have done, in the happier days of Giuliana.

Were I in your situation, I should find a marvellous delight in cherishing such an affectionate illusion in the mind of my mistress. I should
exult

exult in persuading her that she had made me every thing she wished; how charming must it be, to gratify the fond pride of her soul in making her believe that by the tenderness which ministered to your earthly pleasure she was literally leading you to Heaven! How exquisite must the soft features of your Cornelia appear, when animated with the mingled fire of triumphant piety and gratified affection! Trust me, my dear Seymour, those happy rogues (whether hypocrites or not) have had the keenest enjoyment of women, who have had the art to mix Devotion with Love. I cannot say I have great hopes of your regarding my suggestions to you on this subject; for I know you have such a romantic attachment to truth, that you would rather make yourself miserable for life, by adhering to it, than condescend to be usefully and even generously deceitful. What a pity it is that the most obstinate votaries are those of imaginary virtue!

I can easily conceive how you would exult in raising a little jealous apprehension in the soft bosom of Cornelia; but have a care, my good friend; do not, by attempting to waken jealousy in one tender heart, inadvertently throw an amorous flame into another. You are too dangerous a fellow to trifle with an artless and glowing girl of eighteen. Though Louisa Mountmaurice, from the peculiar sprightliness of her character, might be more able to defend her heart against your insinuating attractions than the melting Cornelia; yet pray remember that this niece of your good friend Harriot is composed,

posed, like the rest of her sex, of combustible atoms; and do not suffer your Cupid to shake his torch too near her. As to the advantages you seem to expect from making Cornelia jealous, I have many doubts on that article: doubt, you know, is the characteristic of my mind, and decision of yours. I think much evil might arise from it, and a consequence directly opposite to what your quick fancy has suggested. But I will not pester you with all the thorny conjectures on a contingency that will hardly happen. I must, however, inform you what your very zealous friend Lucy says on your idea; she entreats you, whatever degree of pleasure or influence you may expect to derive from it, never to pursue so barbarous an expedient. She says, what I am convinced is strictly true, that your fair-one's heart is already as entirely yours as Love can make it; and why should you cruelly fill it with agonies that cannot encrease its affection? Lucy goes so far as to affirm, that your tender widow has not strength of mind or body sufficient to support the pangs of the most excruciating passion; and if you make her really jealous in the present perplexed state of her spirits, you must inevitably destroy either her life or her senses. Though I do not quite subscribe to this fearful idea of my sister's, I cannot help joining her in conjuring you to be cautious. Be assured, my dearest friend, that if you will be but temperate and patient, if you will only allow sufficient time for that Love which is certainly the predominant passion of her soul, to subdue and expel the terror that yet adheres to it, you will

will soon make her your wife upon the terms that are most agreeable to your own manly spirit. I am apprised of the generous proposals which you have made to my brother concerning the education of her children; and, trust me, both your queen and her honest privy-counsellor will (if you do not perplex them with your precipitancy) acquiesce in this desirable union, on the ground you propose. But their acquiescence must be the work of deliberation and of time. I will now release you from this tedious lecture; but let me once more repeat our entreaty, for I speak both in Lucy's name and my own, that you will not make yourself wretched by too great an eagerness to be happy. Pardon the prolixity of your timid, affectionate preceptor; and believe me

Ever faithfully yours.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



